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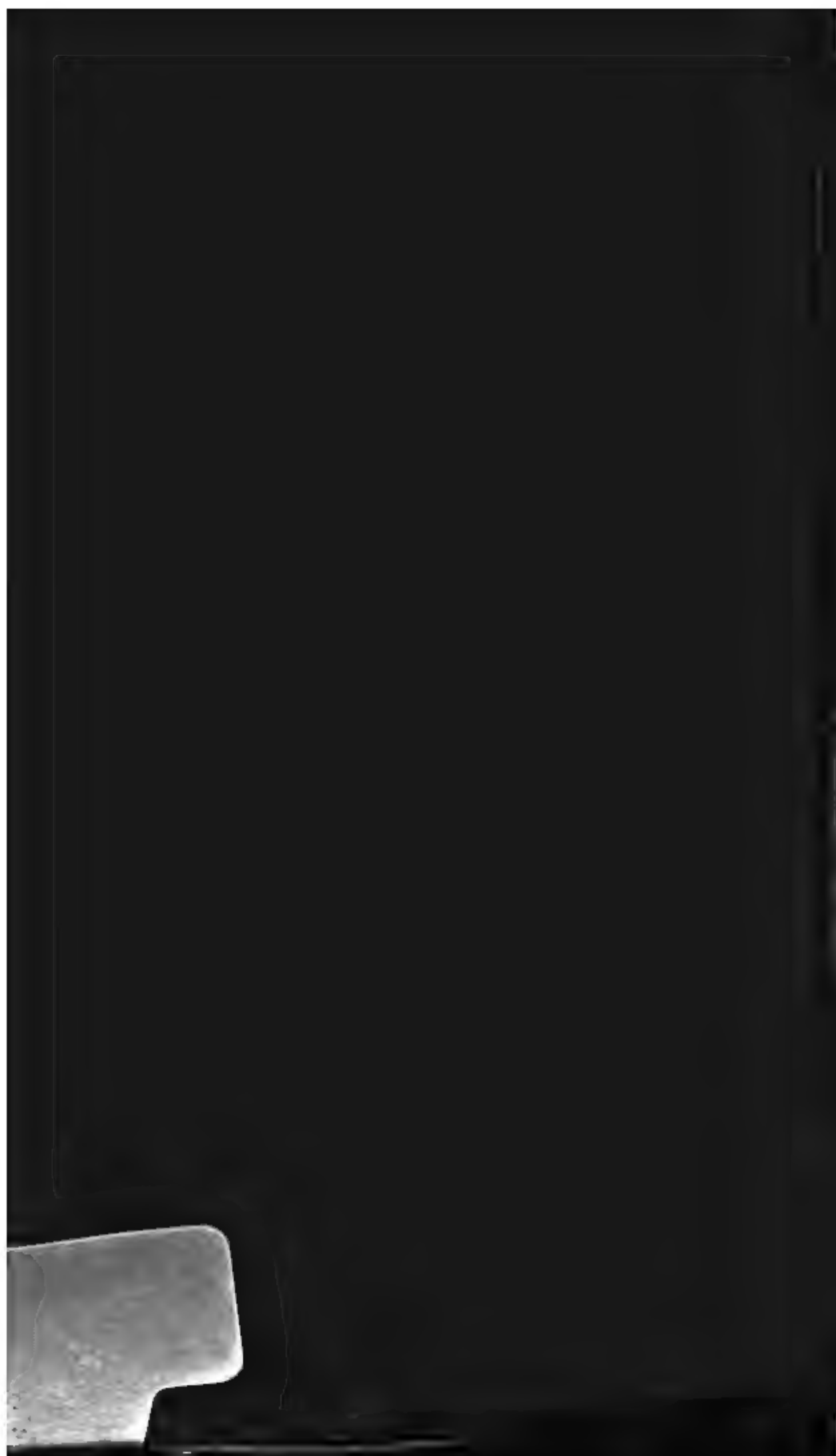
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A
P A I N T E R ' S C A M P
IN THE HIGHLANDS,
AND
THOUGHTS ABOUT ART.

VOL. II.



A
PAINTER'S CAMP

IN THE HIGHLANDS,

AND

THOUGHTS ABOUT ART.

BY

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON,

Author of "THE ISLES OF LOCH AWE."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.—THOUGHTS ABOUT ART.

"Go on quietly with your hard camp-work, and the spirit will come to you in the camp, as it did to Eldad and Medad, if you are appointed to have it."—RUSKIN.

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THOUGHTS ABOUT ART.



CHAPTER I.

THAT CERTAIN ARTISTS SHOULD WRITE ON ART.

I THINK it is Emerson who has said somewhere that no truths are so valuable as those we have come at in endeavouring to satisfy ourselves. The subject of the present chapter has, of course, possessed a personal interest for me, and its conclusions have cost me more thought and care than are usually bestowed on the getting up of a subject merely for literary treatment. If I have sufficient confidence in these conclusions to act upon them it ought to be evident that, whether sound or not, they are at least sincere.

The use of literature cannot merely be to make authors famous and publishers rich. The important service it yields to mankind is *the perpetual registering of the experience of the race*. Without literature it is inconceivable that any race of men could reach a degree of culture comparable to ours, because, without a literature to record it, the experience of dead generations could never be fully available for the living one. Oral and practical tradition no doubt have their use, as we see to

this day in many trades and professions ; but this tradition is in our time nearly always aided by, or based upon, written records. And nothing is more characteristic of our age than its constantly increasing tendency to commit everything to writing. The most ordinary professions and trades have their literatures—trades which not long since were merely traditional. The experience of the race is now registered by literature in all its departments. Our novelists paint the manners of their time. The avowed object of Balzac was to leave on record a speaking portraiture of French life in his time, and though he died before his plan was fully accomplished, he has left us, in the “*Comédie Humaine*,” between two and three thousand characters, every one of which is, to all intents and purposes, a record of real life. The retrospective habit of the last generation, which sought only to revive the past, has given place to a wiser desire to register the present. I call this desire wiser, not because the present is of necessity the best of models, but because it is the *only* one we can study from nature. Some critics accuse this recent tendency of a certain narrowness, as if it were from choice merely that our writers register what they see, whereas it is from an increasing desire to be true, which of course seeks those subjects that alone it is possible for us to paint truly.

So by their love of truth our novelists are driven to register the manners of their own time. How precious such registers will be in a thousand years! Thackeray and Balzac will make it possible for our descendants to live over again in the England and France of to-day.

Seen in this light, the novelist has a higher office than merely to amuse his contemporaries ; he hands them down all living and talking together to the remotest ages. When the new Houses of Parliament and the new Louvre shall be as antique to others as the Colosseum is to us, *they* shall know what manner of men and women first walked under the freshly carved arcades of the new palace on the banks of the Seine, and saw the tall towers grow year after year like young trees at Westminster.

This view of all literature as a register of human experience may be demurred to with regard to some of its departments. It may be objected, for example, that our contemporary poetry is no record of our experience. But it is a record of our *feelings*, and these are a part, and a very important part, of the experience of all cultivated persons. A poem, which has been greatly popular in its own time, even though it may bear no very obvious relation to it, must nevertheless have been in close unison with much contemporary sentiment. Yet even in poetry the tendency to the registering of experience indubitably strengthens. Byron's masterpiece, "Don Juan," is not retrospective at all ; even in "Childe Harold," the retrospection is by no means the strongest element ; and the affectation of the antique, which mars the first two cantos, is frankly abandoned in the third and fourth. Mrs. Browning's best work, "Aurora Leigh," is modern to the core. Tennyson certainly goes back to the fables of King Arthur, but "In Memoriam," "Maud," and several of the best of his minor pieces, are as modern as "The Newcomes."

I mentioned fiction and poetry first because they seemed the weakest point of my argument ; but when I come to periodical literature no one will for a moment dispute that it is strictly a register of all the thoughts and acts of humanity, day by day, week by week, and month by month. In the files of the *Times* our descendants will possess a full and detailed record, not only of our acts, but of our most transient opinions and hopes. A number of the *Times* has not done its work when you or I have read it. Other eyes will read it after a thousand years with all the advantages of that immense experience behind them ! They will see us timidly delaying, or earnestly advocating, changes whose vast results shall to them be matter of history.

Such history as that of Macaulay and Motley is a register of the retrospective kind. It is like the early chapters of an autobiography. In an autobiography we have an accurate type of mankind's ways of placing itself on record. Such records or memories of their life as childhood and youth preserve to maturity are afterwards sifted, judged, arranged, and re-written by the grown man in the full light of his experience. Yet the past is continually slipping away from us, and, though we keep its results, we forget its circumstances. So all that we call history is no better than the early or introductory chapter of Humanity's autobiography. Its best history is its *diary*, that is, its daily newspapers. For histories, though they may preserve facts, which is not always to be said of them, inevitably lose impressions, whereas journalists write down the most transient impressions of the intelligent class in their time. We may,

therefore, look upon the *Times* newspaper not merely as a register of facts but a record of thoughts.

The technical literature which has taken such a vast development of late is, however, the strongest basis of the argument I wish to enforce. The immense quantity of books published within the last twenty years for the especial use of particular trades and professions is one of the best results of the increase of population, and the consequent increase of professional readers. It is, perhaps, in law and medicine that this development is most remarkable, but it extends to all trades, for almost every mechanic can read, and cheap technical literature is brought within the reach of all purses. Mr. Weale, of Holborn, has published a very valuable series of cheap technical works at a shilling a volume. M. Roret, of Paris, has issued an immense encyclopædia, including every conceivable trade from common blacksmith's work up to religious architecture. This encyclopædia is issued in more than three hundred separate pocket volumes at a low price ; their typography is excellent, and their contents generally trustworthy, their most obvious defect being that they are printed on villanous paper, and have very ugly covers.

In reviewing all these technical works the first fact that strikes one with regard to their authors is, that they are none of them what we call literary men. They are not men who live by literature as a profession ; they live by other trades or professions, and resort to literature only as a means of communicating to others their professional observations.

It therefore appears that literature is not an exclusive

profession, but a common magazine to which intelligent men of all classes, and of every occupation, contribute the results of their particular experience. This is the point which I desire the reader to concede. If he maintains, as some literary men do, that literature is a profession which no one can enter without an exclusively literary training, if he believes that no one ought to write who does anything else, it will be necessary for me to argue my point more elaborately.

There is no proof that literature is an exclusive profession ; if it is one, it presents the singular peculiarity that its professors are often surpassed by mere amateurs. It is not at all on the same footing with painting in this respect. The art of pictorial-expression is quite technical and peculiar to a certain limited class of students ; the art of verbal expression is common to all men who can talk, and the art of literary expression to all who can write a letter. It is amazing to me that so many writers will not see a distinction so obvious, and yet I am quite prepared to hear myself accused of the inconsistency of condemning practical dilettantism in painting as a folly, and being myself a practical dilettant in letters.

It is not too much to say that of the great writers of the world, at least one-half have been amateurs. Chaucer and Milton were, and even in the case of Shakespeare, though his plays made money, his authorship was secondary to his business of theatrical manager. Scott and Talfourd were both lawyers, not bred especially to literature ; Kingsley is a clergyman, Ricardo was a banker, so is Grote ; and John Stuart Mill was a hard-

working servant of the East India Company. Sidney Dobell was a wine-merchant, and followed that business assiduously fifteen years. Samuel Warren is an industrious lawyer, Mr. Trollope a clerk in the Civil Service, and the author of "Tom Brown's School-days" a rising barrister, whom I have heard solicitors speak highly of in his professional capacity. These are names which occur to me whilst writing rapidly. If I took time to reflect, I should find a host of other instances of amateurs who have succeeded in literature ; but this is quite needless. It is enough to suggest a truth so obvious. It can require no accumulation of evidence to show, what all men's experience proves, that the faculty of expressing oneself well in written language is by no means peculiar to those who earn their living by it. The contributors to our best reviews are not invariably writers by profession, and their editors are only too happy to receive good articles written by intelligent men in the intervals of quite different avocations. The last phrase reminds me of a book called "Essays written in the Intervals of Business," which is now (1861) in its seventh edition, a fact which of itself proves that a man of business may successfully occupy himself with literature.

No merely literary man can, as such, be expected to write any one of those very useful and even necessary books which treat of subjects that require great special experience. Literary men never do write such books unless prepared for them, as Lewes was for his "Essays on Physiology," by a distinct professional education, quite apart from purely literary culture. If by accident a man who has been intended by his parents for a lawyer, and

educated for the law, and who has practised for some years as a lawyer, afterwards abandons the law for general literature, he may nevertheless compose a legal treatise ; but a magazine writer by profession, who had never received any legal education, could not.

There is no subject in the world of which the mere writer-of-all-work is less competent to treat than art. It is eminently a subject requiring practical experience and especial study. It cannot possibly be grasped in its large relations by minds habitually occupied with other matters, and whose only claim to treat of it is their faculty of verbal expression. It demands great personal devotion, and untiring enthusiasm. It requires also much technical knowledge. The devotion and the enthusiasm are occasionally found in men who are not practically artists, the technical experience never.

This is the reason why our art criticism is for the most part so ignorant and unprofitable. Even the best of it generally deals with works of art in their intellectual aspect only, with a slight admixture of technical jargon, but no intelligent reference to the facts of nature.

I do not, however, argue that artists should write criticism. It is very undesirable that painters should spend any of their time or energy in what would in their case be too likely to degenerate into personal recrimination. It is true that literary men attack each other's works from behind the shelter of the anonymous, and a few of the best art criticisms are contributed to the periodicals by artists. But this is not a desirable direction for the talents of an artist who writes. His

especial office with the pen is to contribute to the general enlightenment on the subject of art in its relation to nature, in ways which need not involve attacks on his living rivals.

True art critics will belong to a separate class, when we shall have enough of them to be called a class. For although I would rather, for the sake of purchasers, and for their greater contentment in their expenditure, that they were all able to judge for themselves, yet I know that power of judgment in art is not possible for them, any more than it is possible for me to settle the claims of rival astronomers, or contending chemists. It is therefore most desirable that the directors of public taste should be highly cultivated and just men, having a due sense of their responsibility, and a profound acquaintance both with the products of art and the appearances of nature.

They ought to be especially educated for their office of criticism. They should be practically acquainted with all the ordinary difficulties of art. The commonest tricks of the studio constantly impose on persons who pretend to judge of performance in art without practical apprenticeship. A real critic can never be an accomplished artist, but he must be able to draw delicately, and must have *tried* to colour, or he will never know what colour means. The most recondite secrets of method must all be as familiar to our critic as his alphabet. He must have drawn from the living figure and dissected the dead. If he presume to criticise landscape, he must have *lived* amongst the noblest natural landscapes, and there filled his note-books with thousands

of memoranda. After long discipline in the life-school, on the mountains, in the forest, by the shores of the great lakes and the sea, out on the storm-waves, and *lastly*, in all the best galleries of Europe, his opinions concerning painting may come to be worth listening to, but not otherwise.

Critics of this order ought of course to be able to express themselves well in written language, but they would not criticise because they were able to write, as so many do now, but, on the contrary, write because they were qualified to criticise, which is a very different thing.

Our common critics at present have nothing to say, but they say it cleverly.

And our painters have often much to say, but they cannot say it at all, or, at the best, clumsily.

I was present on one occasion when a distinguished painter was asked by a young author how it happened that artists so rarely wrote upon their own art. "Because," said the painter, "they are so generally deficient in the first rudiments of a literary education." I believe that answer, however unfavourable to artists, to have been much nearer to the truth than the common theory that there is something essentially incompatible between the literary and artistic intellects. Certainly Ary Scheffer recognised no such incompatibility when he said, that "pour être artiste, il faut avoir en soi un sentiment élevé, ou une conviction puissante, digne d'être exprimé par une langue qui peut être indifféremment la prose, la poésie, la musique, la sculpture ou la peinture." But writing is always extremely irksome and disagreeable

to uneducated people. If the reader had seen certain letters by successful painters, he would not wonder at their feeling uneasy with a pen. It is on record, that a famous artist wrote academy, *accademy*. Another excellent artist who has achieved success in the exhibitions of that society wrote to me several letters, in all of which the word "exhibition" was spelt without the *h*. So here are two first-rate painters who could not either of them spell *both* the two words "academy," "exhibition," *the* two words in the whole language most familiar to the artist in his professional capacity. Here is a charming extract from a letter I received from a leading member of another great artistic corporation:—"My out-door *studdy* begins in *Aprill*. Last year I took *Holand* and *Beligeum*. I *comence* as usual, but next year's *rout* I have not decided on, though I have a strong inclination to *visset* Switzerland again." Turner, of course, spelt badly too, but Mr. Ruskin has had the ingenuity to discover a sort of merit, such as it is, in Turner's bad spelling, which I am sure we are all very much obliged to him for pointing out to us. "All his mistakes in spelling," says his great admirer, "are economical. Many bad spellers waste their letters; but Turner, never. 'Engin' for 'engine;' 'Aust' for 'Aoste,' or 'Aouste;' 'sumit' for 'summit,' or 'sommite;' 'Iser' for 'Isere;' 'le Alps,' for 'les Alpes,' &c."

I am afraid the majority of artists cannot spell, and would be puzzled to write grammatically. For such men to write books is out of the question. It is not for them a matter of choice at all, it is as much as ever they can accomplish to blunder through both sides of a sheet of

note-paper. If the reader has ever had the misfortune to do business with illiterate people, he will easily understand the repugnance of an uneducated artist to take up a pen. It is impossible to do business by correspondence with people to whom the concoction of a letter is a matter requiring much time and thought, for they will leave you ignorant of the very things which it is most necessary you should know, merely to save themselves the dreaded labour of setting them down on paper. Any proprietor who, living at a distance from his tenants, has attempted to keep up a direct communication with them by letter without the intervention of an agent, will, to his cost, have ample data for appreciating the truth of these remarks. Persons to whom the mere act of writing is the most arduous of all exertion are not likely to spend more time upon it than they are absolutely compelled so to spend. This simple consideration is sufficient to account for the fact that artists, in general, are not communicative by means of the pen. If they were all taught to read and write before they began to paint, as clergymen and lawyers are before they begin to preach and to practise, artist writers would, probably, bear as great a proportion to the numbers employed in their art as legal and clerical authors to the other members of their professions. And if painters were so taught to read and write, I am of opinion that they would not paint any worse for it. It does not follow that Turner would have painted less skilfully if he had had such a degree of education as every schoolboy of twelve years old ought to possess. I believe, that if he had been able to write good English, and even spell such French words as he

required as titles to his drawings, he would, nevertheless, in spite of these attainments, have reached his present rank as a landscape-painter.

Those who think that a great artist should shut himself up in mystery and solitude, like the Grand Lama, will say that it is beneath his dignity to communicate any thought to the world, except such as it may discover in his canvasses. I am sorry to differ from these persons on the subject of dignity. According to my views, the sort of dignity which is only to be kept up by holding aloof from men is scarcely worth keeping up at all. I like the free and open circulation of ideas, not the miserly shutting of them up in boxes. One consequence of this reticence on the part of artists is, that the true art of colouring is almost lost to us, and that whilst we have a hundred volumes of empty verbiage by connoisseurs concerning an art they knew nothing about, we have scarcely a line of record from any truly great artist, giving an intelligible account of his technical methods and observations.

In the case of artists who can write and don't, there may be two reasons for their silence. The first is, that when a successful painter lays down the brush to take up a pen, he is sacrificing, for each hour that he writes, a certain calculable sum of money: another reason, very cogent as it seems to me, is a strong conviction, common to most artists, that if they were to say anything about their art it would be of no use, because the public could not understand it. So they are reserved, as gentlemen are with the vulgar, because they believe communication to be so absolutely impossible, that any attempt at it would be trouble thrown away.

This feeling has hitherto been very well founded, but there can be no doubt that a certain portion of the public is advancing towards such a knowledge of art as will shortly enable it to receive the teaching even of artists themselves. The consequence of this, and its inevitable result in creating a demand for a kind of literature relating to the fine arts, will certainly be, that unless artists are themselves prepared to supply such a literature, they will be supplanted by dilettants, who will thus acquire an influence over public opinion on matters connected with art to which they have no natural right. On the other hand, the public itself must be retarded in its art culture by the dissemination of crude and imperfect theories. And since it has not time to investigate such matters for itself, and must always take them on trust from some one in temporary authority, society will, of course, set up its favourite writers as rulers, against whose verdict there will be no appeal. It appears, therefore, desirable that a few good artists in each generation should themselves contribute to the literature of art, in order to maintain the influence which their knowledge entitles them to. For as the priesthood in every religion takes into its own hands the production of a theological literature based on its especial tenets, so, it appears, ought painters to lead the literature of their own art, though I would not discourage intelligent amateurs from freely contributing to it.

It is no use to reply that pictures ought to speak for themselves. Universal experience proves that pictures only speak to persons already advanced in art culture, just as books can only reach people who have learned to

read. Books on art are a concession to the general incapacity to *see*. If people could *see*, artists could teach them directly, without the intervention of literary interpreters. But most people find it much easier to read books about art than to read the art itself. They require to be told to look before they will look, and they require also to be told what to look for. It is owing to this incapacity for seeing without being told, that art itself, and the literature which concerns itself with natural aspects, are necessary to men, else, I suppose, they could enjoy nature without the intervention of painters and writers. At present we enjoy nature much in this fashion. Mr. Turner perceives that mist is beautiful, and paints it. But nobody understands the mist in the picture, because it looks so odd and indistinct. Then comes Mr. Ruskin to tell the folks, this time in plain English, not in paint, and in a fine large legible type, that Turner meant to paint *mist* because mist in nature was to him something charming and delightful. After all this has been stated in print, we go to the Turner Gallery, and perceive that it is indeed mist that Turner meant; then we go to look at natural mist to see whether the Turnerian account of it is true.

Thus there is always some critic or connoisseur between the painter and the public, whose office it is to persuade the public to look at the painter's work, and the painter in his turn has to get the spectator to look at nature, if he can. Writers on nature and art are clever oculists, for they give sight to the blind. But all such writing is a condescension to that blindness. All the principles of architecture that Ruskin has ever stated are contained

and exemplified in half a dozen ruinous old buildings ; but very few people saw them in the buildings till they read about them in the books. So all the principles of painting that he has illustrated and enforced, and a thousand others that no words can ever express, are fully contained and splendidly exemplified in the works of five or six great artists. But in order to see them in the pictures it was necessary first to read about them in the book. The crumbling stone and mouldering canvass gave their lessons unheeded to thankless and careless children, but the attention of these children was at once arrested by brilliant language that they could easily understand, and fresh-looking, well-printed pages, that it was a pleasure to read.

Pictures to be understood by the great public always require a commentary, and the best commentators would often be the painters themselves, if they would condescend to explanation. A great service would be rendered by certain artists to the public if they accompanied their most original works with a printed note, kindly explaining everything that the ordinary spectator could not be expected to understand, and gently guiding his attention to such natural phenomena as had been translated on the canvass. Such friendly condescension would do more to advance a right understanding of art than endless literary criticism of it. For a careful painter must necessarily have looked at nature, which cannot with equal certainty be predicted of a clever critic ; and a painter must, at least, have *seen* a picture he has himself painted, whereas a critic will often put together a few clever phrases about a work he has never really taken

the trouble to look into. If we had a complete catalogue of all Turner's works, carefully annotated by himself, with details of the circumstances under which every impression was received and recorded, how interesting and precious it would be! The only notes at all like this, left by any great artist, are, I imagine, those brief ones by Reynolds on the materials employed in his portraits. Such notes ought, of course, to include processes and materials, giving a faithful account of the technical history of the work; but this is not enough, the intellectual history of it should be recorded too; and in the case of landscapes everything interesting in the locality should be pointed out, all changes in the topography of the place for the sake of composition being frankly confessed.

In this way the *registering* function of the pen would be very usefully exercised; but I would not have the literary work of all artists limited to this. Those who have a natural capacity for literary expression ought to record, in the form of essays and treatises, or, if professors in any academy, in the form of lectures, their views on those great questions of art which are yet subject to dispute, and also their sincere opinions on deceased artists. It would be extremely interesting, for example, and very instructive, to know what Turner really thought of Claude, as we should know it if he had written a treatise on Claude. The fact that Velasquez liked Titian, and did not like Raphael, is one of the most interesting things which have descended to us concerning him. And though the discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds are full of fallacies, no one who loves art would consent that they should be lost, because, whether

erroneous or not, they are a true record of his opinions, and all that he thought is interesting to us.

One of the best examples of a kind of art-literature, which falls naturally within the province of the professional artist, is Sir Charles Eastlake's "Materials for a History of Oil-Painting." The great learning and research which he has devoted to the elucidation of technical details of the most useful kind peculiarly entitle him to the gratitude of artists, and I here respectfully tender him an acknowledgment of mine.

The biography of artists is the department of literature in which painters have hitherto chiefly distinguished themselves. The biographer of a painter has frequent opportunities of conveying opinions on art, and on matters connected with art, without that directness which makes the writer of essays so peculiarly responsible. Vasari's lives, though not written with that vivid reality which our most recent school of history aims at, are nevertheless a durable monument raised by one artist to his brethren and ancestors in art.

I have said that the reserve of artists who are able to write and do not is, in part, due to their impression that the public is too ignorant to understand them—too ignorant, that is, to understand the said artists as the artists would express themselves. There is, however, another side to this question. People who are not understood may be so from *two* causes, either the want of intelligence in others, or the want of expressional art in themselves. This last want often makes them irritable and discourteous when their opinion is asked for by persons whom they consider incapable of comprehending

it if given. I have seen artists who, when asked what were the best technical processes in use at the present day, would get quite impatient, as if there were something really absurd in the question, whereas it is a pre-eminently rational question, and one which admits of a ready, though not a brief reply. This comes of their want of literary practice, and their consequent difficulty in expression. There is a passage in Emerson's Essay on Plato very much to the point. "Children cry, scream, and stamp with fury, unable to express their desires. As soon as they can speak, and tell their want, and the reason of it, they become gentle. In adult life, whilst the perceptions are obtuse, men and women talk vehemently and superlatively, blunder and quarrel: their manners are full of desperation, their speech is full of oaths. As soon as with culture things have cleared up a little, and they see them no longer in lumps and masses, but accurately distributed, they desist from that weak vehemence and explain their meaning in detail. If the tongue had not been framed for articulation, man would still be a beast in the forest. The same weakness and want, on a higher plane, occurs daily in the education of ardent young men and women. 'Ah! you don't understand me; I have never met with any one who comprehends me;' and they sigh and weep, write verses and walk alone—fault of power to express their precise meaning. In a month or two, through the favour of their good genius, they meet some one so related as to assist their volcanic estate; and good communication being once established, they are thenceforward good citizens."

If it needs culture to receive, it also needs culture to communicate ideas by words. When artists know something about art they usually say that it is incommunicable, which, in most cases, only means that the man himself does not know how to explain it. Ignorant artists cannot even teach pupils except by example, which, whatever may be said of it in morals, needs, in art, to be accompanied by a great deal of intelligent commentary and precept if it is to be of any great use to the learner. But the ordinary artist can only *do*; he cannot explain how it is done, even with all the advantages of direct personal communication, much less in a book. The whole course of Mr. Ruskin's career has, however, been a clear and full explanation of thousands of things already known and acted upon by artists, but considered by them inexplicable.

No one will be astonished at this who has ever had occasion to seek information from illiterate people on subjects they practically understand. A marine engineer of great experience told me that the ordinary workmen in his business know nothing whatever of the principles which govern their own work, and could not explain the very things they themselves make without falling into endless blunders. Many a homely illustration of the same truth may be found in the details of a farm. Illiterate farmers not only *will* not, but really *cannot*, explain their most habitual operations, because to explain anything rightly requires long practice in intellectual analysis, and a great command of words. The author of a popular little book, "Our Farm of Four Acres," found that it was useless to consult farmers' wives on the im-

portant subject of butter-making.* I believe that it is generally equally useless to consult artists on the subject of picture-making, and for the same reason. But when intelligent ladies take to farming, as Madame Millet-Robinet has done, it is astonishing how many things *they* find means to explain, and how lucidly they explain them. It also seems probable that when intelligent and cultivated gentlemen, like Sir Charles Eastlake and Mr. Leslie, are no longer rare in the artist class, artists will more frequently write on art.

* I am perfectly serious. Butter-making *is* an important subject, which, as a farmer myself, not only of four acres, but on the comparatively vast scale of twenty-eight acres, I am in a position to appreciate.

CHAPTER II.

THE PAINTER IN HIS RELATION TO SOCIETY.

“ IF a man applies himself to *servile* or mechanic employments, his industry in those things is a proof of his inattention to nobler studies. *No young man of noble birth or liberal sentiments, from seeing the Jupiter at Pisa, would desire to be Phidias, or from the sight of the Juno at Argos to be Polycletus.*” So says old Plutarch, and we may, therefore, argue from this passage alone, if other proofs were wanting, that the artist was, in his time, socially considered, a despised person. The secret of Plutarch’s contempt for Phidias lies in the word *servile*. He respected *government* and not *servitude*. He liked the rough virtues, often in reality very great vices, which lead men to power, and he had an honest contempt for such mean genius as that of Phidias and Polycletus, which exercised itself in the service of mankind.

Most people are of Plutarch’s opinion ; he only gave a frank expression to one of the fundamental instincts of humanity. The thermometer does not more accurately indicate the precise degree of caloric present in any fluid than the popular respect the degree of governmental power present at any given epoch in any one class of society. Its indications are quite reliable. Men

respect only *power*. They detect the exact amount of it present in any class of their contemporaries with an instinct which is absolutely infallible, and in strict proportion to the amount of power present is the degree of deference yielded.

The sword has at all times been an exceedingly powerful instrument. So the military profession has always been in the highest degree respectable, and from the days of Alexander of Macedon, downwards, kings and emperors have practically adopted this profession without derogating from the dignity of their birth.

When there is little intellectual enlightenment the fear of the supernatural tyrannizes over the masses. An eminently intelligent class has always turned this vague dread to political account as an instrument of authority stronger than weapons of steel, and the temple has menaced the world as sternly as the fortress. By this threatening, authoritative attitude, the sacerdotal body first conquered the world's respect. This position was not gained, nor ever could have been gained, by mild persuasion, but by rack and red-hot pincers in this world, and menaces of eternal tortures for the next.*

Then, in a more civilized state, when the sword can no longer settle private quarrels, and interests become more complex, a third class makes itself felt as a power in society, more subtle and silent in its workings than the other two, yet gradually absorbing into its own hands the government of property, the guardianship of orphans, and the administration of justice. It is to the vast, though unrecognised, influence of barristers and attorneys

* If the reader doubts this, let him study the history of the middle ages.

that the legal profession owes that part of its social position for which the high public functionaries, chosen from its ranks, are not in themselves a satisfactory explanation. There is, however, a very curious social distinction between the two branches of this profession, which I reserve for the present, and yet which will itself be found to bear out the argument that political power is the real standard of social respectability.

Since the latter half of the eighteenth century two or three other occupations have risen into such importance as to rival the elder professions.

To spin cotton thread, to weave calico, to stain it with patterns, to manufacture carpets, and blankets, and even steel pens, have become avenues to political power. And to do these things on a large scale is rapidly becoming respectable, even in the strictest conventional sense. A little external roughness of manner, provincialism of dialect, and so forth, may retard the recognition of the industrial chiefs in their true character, but the people will find out before long, who have not found it out already, that when a man governs a thousand artisans he is a leader of men and a power in the state. When this is generally understood the great industrial chief will rank side by side with the great landowner in the popular estimation.

Even the mere capitalist, who lives quietly on the interest of his fortune, is respected for the great reserve of power represented by the sum he possesses. But when he employs this power actively in the affairs of other individuals he becomes the centre of forces whose complicated effects it is impossible to calculate, and so the

money-lender has a place in the modern world which becomes stronger in proportion to the increased security of his transactions, and the extension of commerce, whereof he holds the strings. "I very early discerned," said Heinrich Heine, "that bankers would one day be the rulers of the world."

But the social history of literature is the best illustration of the inherent respectability of power. In the days when Sir Everard Waverley, of Waverley Honour, received political intelligence through the medium of Mr. Dyer's manuscript "Weekly News-letter," and Mr. Dyer would often humbly plead for an extra gratuity from the gentlemen who patronized him on account of the expense he had been put to in collecting information in coffee-houses; in those days, I fancy, the provincial magnate had little conception of the power which the successors of good Mr. Dyer were destined to wield in these latter days, when a newspaper correspondent is respectfully received by a Governor-General of India, and confidentially informed by a commander-in-chief of the details of his strategy, on the sole condition that he will not divulge them at the seat of war. Writers are often earnest, but they are not respected for their earnestness; they are often humane and tender-hearted, but they are not respected for their gentleness; but the writer who is sure of the public ear, as, for instance, the contributor to an established periodical, has an appreciable social and political power, and it is for that power alone that literature has begun to be respected.

Before a man of rank will enter any profession he always asks himself, more or less consciously, "Will this

business help me to govern?" and if a career does not open a fair prospect of governmental influence he will not concern himself with it.

Perhaps we ought to respect virtue more than power, but we don't. And when I state this shocking fact let no reader cry out as if his fine moral sense were hurt. Moral excellence, as an abstraction, or in men long ago dead, who are become, as it were, mere shadows and abstractions, is very much extolled indeed; but somehow, when embodied in an individual person actually existing in the world, the noblest qualities are apt to lose their ideal lustre, and are not half so attractive to the mass of men as mere vulgar force.

The reader may answer this by an appeal to history, and try to show how tyrants have been hated and resisted. But no student who has read history by the light of common sense can have failed to perceive that it is not the strong, steady tyranny of *power* that has ever been regarded with disfavour by the masses, but only the spasmodic cruelties of weak sovereigns, whose power was slipping from their grasp. I am convinced that it was the weakness of the Neapolitan dynasty, and not its cruelty, which caused our political chiefs to speak with such contempt of it in the House of Commons. Had the King of Naples been a powerful sovereign, Lord Palmerston would have spoken of him in the same respectful language he was accustomed to employ when alluding to an august ally, his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of the French. And all through what we are taught to call "History," you will find that the strong tyrant is very much respected, and that it is on the weak

tyrant, his descendant, that all his sins are visited, both by the people who rebel against him, and the writers who hold him up to the execration of a discriminating public.

I suppose that this instinctive reverence for the mighty is a natural law essential to the cohesion of society. Developed to excess it becomes, however, ineffably mean and contemptible. Mr. Thackeray's ideal of a "snob" is merely a person in whom this instinct predominates.

If the reader has ever felt the peculiar physical sensation produced on the nervous system by contact with some individual of enormous power, he will not think it an exaggeration to attribute much of the influence exercised by very powerful persons over the rest of their species to a sense existing in the nature of every one of us which was intended to *feel* this peculiar influence, and prepare men beforehand for submission. Who could have touched Cæsar without feeling this magnetic emanation? Dr. Livingstone says that the contact of the lion's paw conquers the will of its victim, and makes him insensible to its bite. So a great human power fascinates the imagination and subdues the will. Before the kings of men open their lips the listeners are ready to obey. In the presence of a Russian autocrat the head swims with a vague sense of the infinity of his influence and the inconceivable vastness of his empire. Down the great scales of life this effect on the imagination becomes less and less in proportion to the diminution of power, till it causes mere politeness to the landed proprietor, who is king only of a few acres.

An old gentleman, a Frenchman, whom I know very

well, was one day walking down the Rue Vivienne in Paris. He was absorbed in calculations, for he was a member of one of the greatest financial houses in Europe, and it was a busy time for their house, which had large transactions with embarrassed sovereigns. Lost to all surrounding objects, my friend suddenly came in contact with a foot-passenger walking in the opposite direction, lifted his hat to apologize, and found himself face to face with a little man who at that time was making a considerable noise in the world. The little man whom my friend M. O—— had jostled off the footpath was the Emperor Napoleon the First, then at the very height of his power, taking a quiet walk with Duroc, as his custom was.

Now M. O—— told me this story one evening as we were walking together down the same street, and I remember he commented on the odd sensation he had experienced. Having a turn for philosophical reflection, he was much interested in trying to account to himself for a certain fascination which had fixed him to the spot for some minutes after the accident. I believe that he had merely felt the shock of immeasurable power. The man whom M. O—— had pushed off the footpath was at that very hour shaking the thrones of the world. Every king in Europe feared him. My friend felt, no doubt, as if he had come into contact with something superhuman.

I can realize the sensation tolerably well, from having myself experienced it in a less degree. Once, at a ball in Paris, I was talking with an old French general, when a third person, also in uniform, came and shook hands

with my neighbour. "*Eh bien, comment ça va-t-il?*" were the stranger's remarkable words—nothing in them to astonish or electrify one. Yet I *did* feel an odd, tingling sensation, for the stranger's waxed moustachios stood out like rats' tails, the eye was dull and glassy, the face expressionless, like a bronze bust, and the nose strangely familiarised to me already in *Punch*. It was Napoleon III. I am ashamed to have to add that I caught myself making a profound bow, just like a liveried courtier.

I am sure that in these cases the torpedo shock of a power which the imagination could not grasp was the real cause of that temporary paralysis of the will which fastened my friend by the soles of his feet to the spot where he had buffeted the uncle, and which made me bow to the nephew, without the slightest consideration for my private sentiments. And I think we have here the secret of the awfulness of might, and the respect it inspires, whereas mere ability or even goodness is not awful at all, and nobody yields much respect either to one or the other.

The other half of the argument, namely, that political impotence is held contemptible, is just as easy to prove. Society does not concern itself with the inherent nobleness of any occupation, only with its governmental power. For instance, the medical profession, in itself one of the very noblest of callings, and one of the most glorious fields in the realms of human exertion, is only considered respectable by the middle-class—the upper, or governing classes, do not own it. People of rank receive their "medical attendant" with no more notion that he

is their intellectual equal, than if he were only a superior species of hairdresser, or any other *attendant* (note the peculiar offensiveness of the phrase). The work of surgeons and physicians requires very careful training, and when it passes out of the limits of routine calls into exercise the very highest moral and intellectual qualities; but these men have no place in society because their profession does not conduct them to political power. If a nobleman's daughter were to form an attachment for her "medical man," her family would be thrown into the uttermost consternation, whereas she may marry a country parson without loss of caste.

Another very curious illustration is supplied by the two branches of the legal profession. The bar is an avenue to political power, but an attorney's office is not (except in so far as a country solicitor in large practice may sometimes influence an election). So this busier and more generally lucrative branch is not recognised by society on equal terms. An attorney is a gentleman by Act of Parliament, but the higher circles of society do not ratify the parliamentary title by receiving him as an equal, and younger sons of noble families never by any chance get themselves articulated to attorneys. The attorney, however, indemnifies himself for his social wrongs by patronizing barristers at their entrance into life, and governing proprietors through his intimate knowledge of their private affairs.

All these inconsistencies are at once explained by the theory that *power* is respectability. The more power a man has, the more he will be respected, and the less power he has, the less he will be respected, till we

come down to those individuals whose power is so exceedingly limited as to excite no sensations of respect whatever.

Now I should like to know how a man is ever to make himself terrible by painting pretty little pictures, or even great big ugly ones? Who is afraid of a picture? It can't kill one like a sword, nor damage one's fair fame like a newspaper, nor hold one up to the reprobation of the godly like a preacher. It is absolutely innocuous. People are not forced to buy it, nor even to look at it. There it hangs in its pretty gilt frame, saying, "Pray come and look at me, ladies and gentlemen; I am really very beautiful and very true, and—my price is marked in the catalogue."

And accordingly, if we study the social position of the artist, we shall find it slippery, unsatisfactory, and insecure. Goethe observes somewhere, that though the artist is a privileged person, and though his talent has an inward certainty, its outward relation is peculiarly uncertain. One can easily fancy that the position of a great Greek sculptor in a society holding Plutarch's notions must have been anything but pleasant. And since, as I said before, the world generally is quite of Plutarch's opinion, the modern successors of Phidias, whether in sculpture, or other fine art, find a frank and equal intercourse with the world next to impossible for them.

The best and truest pictures of contemporary manners are, undoubtedly, to be found in what the French call "studies of manners," or those modern novels in which the society of to-day is painted from the life. Let us

see how the painter's relation to this society is sketched by one or two of the ablest hands.*

In the "Newcomes," when young Clive devotes himself to painting, it is considered a family disgrace by his friends, whose place in society, by the way, is of quite recent acquisition, and whose origin is so low, that they are all forced to tell lies about it. But Clive is not on the road to power, and of course, without power, gets no consideration from the governing classes. His occupation withdraws him from the society of gentlemen, and we find him, not at university wine-parties with young lords, but working at Gandish's with a set of low flatterers for his associates, and the son of a domestic servant for his most intimate friend. That reverend puppy, Charles Honeyman, the perfect incarnation of all that the weakest women most deeply love and reverence, says with bland dignity, "My dear Clive, there are degrees in society which we must respect. You surely cannot think of being a professional artist. Such a profession is very well for your *protégé*—but for you . . ." when Clive vehemently interrupts him. Mrs. Hobson Newcome tells the Colonel that his boy is not good enough to associate with hers, because "he lives with artists and all sorts of eccentric people," whereas hers "are bred on quite a different plan. Hobson will succeed his father in the bank, and dear Samuel," she trusts, "will go into the Church." The father of these hopeful young gentlemen calls Clive's devotion to art "this madcap

* Part of what follows is abridged from a review article contributed by myself to the *West of Scotland Magazine and Review*, and entitled "Artist-Life in Fiction."

freak of turning painter.” “Confound it,” says he, “why doesn’t my brother set him up in some respectable business? I ain’t proud; I have not married an earl’s daughter but a painter! hang it, a painter’s no trade at all—I don’t fancy seeing one of our family sticking up pictures for sale. I don’t like it, Barnes,” and two minutes afterwards he heartily damns “all literary men, all artists, the whole lot of them!” The said Barnes agrees pleasantly with his uncle, and farther on in the book, speaks of his cousin Clive as “a beggarly painter, an impudent snob, an infernal young puppy,” and so forth. Even Clive’s father did not seriously believe that his son would live by painting pictures, but considered him as a young prince who chose to amuse himself with painting. Mr. Barnes mentions at home “a singular whim of Colonel Newcome, who can give his son twelve or fifteen hundred a year, and makes an artist of him.” Ethel writes to the Colonel from Baden, “You will order Clive not to sell his pictures, won’t you? I know it is not wrong, but your son might look higher than to be an artist. It is a rise for Mr. Ridley, but a fall for him. An artist, an organist, a pianist, all these are very good people; but, you know, not ‘*de notre monde*,’ and Clive ought to belong to it.”* Mrs. Mackenzie, when Clive in his adversity tries to

* Ethel’s reasoning here is feminine. She confounds together persons of creative and of merely interpretative power. They ought to be clearly separated, thus—

CREATORS.

Poets.

Original Painters.

Musical Composers.

INTERPRETERS.

Translators.

Engravers and Copyists.

Musical Performers.

support the house by his labour, says, "It is most advisable that Clive should earn some money by that horrid profession he has chosen to adopt—trade I call it." And Thackeray himself says, "the Muse of Painting is a lady, whose social position is not altogether recognised with us as yet. The polite world permits a gentleman to amuse himself with her, but to take her for better or for worse! forsake all other chances and cleave unto her! to assume her name! many a respectable person would be as much shocked at the notion, as if his son had married an opera-dancer. However, it never entered into Clive's head to be ashamed of the profession he had chosen, and though he saw many of his schoolfellows in the world, these entering into the army, others talking with delight of college and its pleasures or studies, yet, having made up his mind that art was his calling, he refused to quit her for any other mistress, and plied his easel very stoutly."

But Thackeray is too profound a student of human nature not to let this continual opposition have its natural effect in the end. The fact is, our affections must be very deeply engaged in a pursuit to enable us to follow it steadily against the opinion of all around us; and Clive, not being a born painter like J. J., but only a lad of good abilities (not of genius in any wise) having the choice of war with his father and his wife, or the virtual abandonment of his art, does as most of us would under similar circumstances, pursues the art by stealth with just sufficient ardour to make his wife jealous of it, but not half enough ardour for success in it. So he is miserable (being in a false position), and

J. J. feelingly laments for his friend—"Among them they have taken him away from his art. They don't understand him when he talks about it, they despise him for pursuing it. Why should I wonder at that? my parents despised it too, and my father was not a grand gentleman like the Colonel." Ultimately, when restored to prosperity by his marriage with Ethel, Clive shaves his beard and abandons his art. The moral of the story is thus admirably completed.

This J. J. Ridley, the true artist, is only the son of a domestic servant. Thackeray could not have made him the son of a gentleman, because the obstacles placed by society in the path of a man of genius of sufficient worldly rank to bring him within its influence are nearly insurmountable, and all the terrible difficulties of poverty and ignorance are as nothing in comparison with the one difficulty of facing social degradation. Gentlemen are the born officers of the social army, and they do not like to have their epaulettes torn off. But men in the ranks may do the menial work of the world, because their position is so humble already that it cannot well suffer by any act not absolutely criminal. So the butler's boy may paint pictures as he might have brushed boots, and nobody considers it a degradation, except his parents, who probably had higher views for their son, and would have liked to see him in livery.

The other professional artists, to whom Mr. Thackeray introduces us, are not men who would naturally take a strong position amongst gentlemen. Gandish, the martyr to "Igh art," tells Smee, the portrait-painter, the secret history of a grand work. "The models of the hancient

Britons in that pictur alone cost me thirty pound—when I was a struggling man, and had just married my Betsy here. You reckonise Boadishia, Colonel, with the Roman 'elmet, cuirass, and javeling of the period—all studied from the hantique, sir, the glorious hantique.” Again, with what a wonderful command of all the resources of our language does the same eloquent artist discourse to Colonel Newcome on his illustrations of English History. “If you do me the honour to walk into the Hatrium, you'll remark my great pictures also from English 'istory. An English historical painter, sir, should be employed chiefly in English 'istory. That's what I would have done. Why ain't there temples for us where the people might read their history at a glance without knowing how to read? Why is my Alfred 'anging up in this 'all? Because there is no patronage for a man who devotes himself to Igh Art. You know the anecdote, Colonel. King Alfred flying from the Danes took refuge in a neaterd's 'ut. The rustic's wife told him to bake a cake, and the fugitive sovering sat down to his ignoble task, and, forgetting it in the cares of state, let the cake burn, on which the woman struck him. The moment chose is when she is lifting her 'and to deliver the blow. The king receives it with majesty, mingled with meekness. In the background the door of the 'ut is open, letting in the royal officers to announce the Danes are defeated. The daylight breaks in at the aperture, signifying the dawning of 'Ope. That story, sir, which I found in my researches in 'istory, has since become so popular, sir, that hundreds of artists have painted it, hundreds! I, who discovered the legend, have my

picture—here!” In a country where the due aspiration of the letter *h* is considered the indispensable qualification of every one claiming the rank of gentleman, I do not see how Mr. Gandish could ever expect to be recognised as one.

It is observable that whenever Mr. Thackeray has anything to say of the artistic class, it is always to leave a strong impression on the reader's mind of the artist's social nonentity. The memory of Becky Sharp's father, for instance, is never recalled in a manner favourable to him, his drunkenness or his poverty being the characteristics by one or other of which he is roughly hauled before the reader from time to time. In “The Newcomes” the only supportable artist is J. J. Ridley; but in an aristocratic country like this, people don't particularly affect the society of their domestics or their families, and it is therefore a considerable obstacle to Mr. Ridley's social success that his father is a butler. Gandish is an ignorant old goose, and Smee one of the meanest of toadies. Clive Newcome is not an artist at all; but if, by courtesy, we count him as one, his idleness and infirmity of purpose were no credit to that profession which his swell manners adorned. In the character sketches the essay entitled “The Artists” does not contain one single portrait agreeable enough to make one wish to know the original; and by continually exhibiting poverty and meanness on the one hand, or a base and unworthy success on the other, as the opposite poles of the artistic career, the writer easily conveys the impression that the career is in itself inevitably degrading. But this, as I happen to know, is not Mr. Thackeray's

own private opinion at all. As an individual, Thackeray loves and reverences our art to a degree that no one would believe possible who knew no more about him than is to be gathered from his published works. It is as a satirist only that he laughs at the brotherhood of the brush, and the brethren of that order are no worse off than any other order of men of whom that satirist treats. Without, therefore, complaining in any way of this rough usage, we have only to note with regard to Thackeray's works, considered as a collection of studies from life, taken by one who scorns the artifice of flattery, that the artists occupy in them much the same position, relatively to the rest of the world, that they do in real life, that is to say a very unsound and unsatisfactory position.

In "St. Ronan's Well" the guests at the *table d'hôte* cannot believe Tyrrell to be a professional artist, simply because his manners are good.

"I doubt, too, if he is a professional artist," said Lady Binks. "If so, he is of the very highest class, for I have seldom seen a better-bred man."

"There are very well-bred artists," said Lady Penelope; "it is the profession of a gentleman."

"Certainly," answered Lady Binks, "but the poorer class have often to struggle with poverty and dependence. In general society they are like commercial people in presence of their customers, and that is a difficult part to sustain. And so you see them of all sorts—shy and reserved, when they are conscious of merit—petulant and whimsical by way of showing their independence—intrusive in order to appear easy—and

sometimes obsequious and fawning when they chance to be of a mean spirit. But you seldom see them quite at their ease, and therefore I hold this Mr. Tyrrell to be either an artist of the first class, raised completely above the necessity and degradation of patronage, or else to be no professional artist at all."

There is an exquisite touch in the fifth chapter, which I cannot omit, though a little out of place. Lady Penelope, when Tyrrell avows his artistic character, "had to recede," says Scott; and mark this, for it is thoroughly masterly and characteristic, "from the respectful and easy footing on which he had contrived to place himself, to one which might express patronage on her own part and dependence on Tyrrell's, and this could not be done in a moment." Sir Walter Scott knew nothing of painting, but, of course, observed closely whatever might indicate the social estimate of art. Sir Walter never once penetrated beyond the surface of the artistic nature, and, though a great artist himself in his work, was merely a dilettant in feeling. Still, even to him, who had no sympathy whatever with painters, it was plain enough that society, in his day, did not treat them on terms of equality.

As Scott in "St. Ronan's Well," and Thackeray in "the Newcomes," have illustrated our subject, so has Charles Dickens in "Little Dorrit." "Mr. Henry Gowan, inheriting from his father, the commissioner, that very questionable help in life, a very small independence, had been difficult to settle. At last he had declared that he would become a painter; partly because he had always had an idle knack that way, and partly to grieve the

souls of the Barnacles in chief who had not provided for him. So it came to pass that several distinguished ladies had been frightfully shocked." And of all the shocked ladies, Gowan's mother was shocked the most. She says to Clennam, "Perhaps you have heard that I have suffered the keenest distress of mind from Henry's having taken to a pursuit which—well!" shrugging her shoulders, "a very respectable pursuit I dare say, and some artists are, as artists, quite superior persons; still, we never yet in our family have gone beyond an amateur, and it is a pardonable weakness to feel a little—" Here Mrs. Gowan sighed. Poor Mrs. Gowan! if she had any fears for her gentle son that his high blood had the taint of talent, they were entirely unfounded; the boy was empty enough, and unprincipled enough, for the most respectable employment.

A very clever and not unfair statement of the causes for the peculiar jealousy with which the rich trading class regards cultivated persons, and, above all, persons artistically cultivated, is put into the mouth of an intelligent man of business by Miss Jewsbury, in her masterly novel, "*The Half-Sisters*," a novel, by the way, which enters better into the true artist feeling than any other I know. I have never seen the question so skilfully handled; in the few sentences I shall quote, considerations are taken into account which would altogether escape any ordinary observer. The statement, that authors and artists have "no professional or business-like habits" is not true, as Mr. Smiles proved in his "*Self-help*;" but it is perfectly well placed, dramatically, in the mouth of a mere man of business, being a prejudice

common to his class. It is Mr. Bryant who speaks first, a great master-miner.

“Professional people live in a world of their own ; and it is very undesirable that they should be introduced into the private circles of the middle classes I have a singular objection to meeting with authors, actors, artists, or professional people of any sort, except in the peculiar exercise of their vocation, which I am willing to pay for. There may be respectable people amongst them, but they are not sufficient to give a colouring to the class ; and as a class, there is a want of stamina about them ; they have no precision or business-like habits, the absence of which leaves an opening for faults with very ugly names ; and persons whose profession it is to amuse others and make themselves pleasing, cannot, in the nature of things, expect to take a very high position. Men cannot feel reverence or respect for those who aspire to amuse them !”

“Well !” cried Conrad, laughing, “I have always observed that heavy, sententious, stupid persons, seem to entertain a species of contempt for those who possess the lighter gifts of being entertaining ; but I never heard it made into a theory before. To leave that part of the question, however, let me ask you whether you consider that the province of those who profess the fine arts is only to amuse ? Do you think that they have gained the real end of their labour when they are paid for what they do ? and do you consider the production of works of art to be a mere mode of earning a living ?”

“This is an industrial country,” said Bryant ; “the great mass of sympathy and intellect takes a practical

direction—a direction that we understand ; we have no real knowledge of art, no real instinct or genuine aspiration after it ; and I should say that in our hearts we do not respect, love, or honour fine art in any of its manifestations, as we do that which is scientific or practical. To the Italians, to the French even, music and pictures are necessities of life ; to us English they only take the guise of ornament or convenience—of superfluity, in short. That being the case, we naturally do not feel drawn to the society of artists ; we have nothing in common with them—we do not admire them ; neither do we feel disposed to introduce to the society of our wives and daughters a parcel of actors, artists, musicians, and so forth, who have no stake in society, who have little to lose, whose capital is all invested in themselves and their two hands, and who have, therefore, naturally cultivated themselves far beyond what we practical men have had a chance of doing, and are capable of throwing us into the shade in our own houses, whilst they show that they despise us. Let them keep their places, and let us keep ours !”

“But do you allow nothing for the civilizing influence of men of cultivated intellect amongst you ?” said Conrad.

“Railroads will do more,” replied Bryant ; “every people must work out its civilization in its own way. Love of the fine arts is *not* our speciality—we do not know a good thing from a bad one unless we are told ; and the pretence we make about it has a bad effect on our character.”

Mr. Bryant’s idea that the clever folks should be

banished into a world of their own, and not allowed to enliven the society of the dull ones, is exceedingly happy, and I should be glad to see it realised. The stupid world might thus be left to enjoy its stupidity in peace, and digest its heavy dinners with an easy mind. As for the unpleasant fellows who live by their wits, and scribble books, and paint, and so forth, I dare say their society may be agreeable enough to such as can understand them, but their absence from some circles would certainly be a great relief, for nobody likes to be laughed at, and I'm sure these clever fellows *do* laugh at people they ought to respect—people who give them better dinners than they would ever get if they had to pay for them.

Painters are not very often alluded to by our poets, though there are plenty of poems about pictures, of which the great majority are sad trash. The only bit of well-known verse which I just now remember, as really to our purpose, is this line in "The Lord of Burleigh"—

He is but a landscape-painter.

There is, however, a good deal in that little word *but*—as much perhaps as in all I have quoted from Scott and Thackeray. For instance, if I were to say of Mr. Tennyson,

He is but a Poet-laureate,

the reader would at once infer that in my opinion the laureateship was not a respectable office. So we may very allowably conclude, from the significant employment of the word *but*, that in Mr. Tennyson's estimate of

social position a landscape-painter must be content to occupy a very humble place.

On the table where I am writing there happens to be a book of travels in the Highlands. I have just been reading a few pages about Loch Long, and have come upon a passage about sketching from Nature. I should have been very much astonished if the art could have been alluded to without some indication of contempt for its professors, and accordingly, just at the end of the paragraph, comes a bit of disdain which is quite comic in its conceit.

“As I was amusing myself here with drawing the Cobbler amongst a crowd of herring-fishers, one of them, who had been very intent on the proceeding, said, when it was done, ‘I wish I could draw like you.’ I remarked, that herring-fishing was a better trade. ‘I canna think that,’ was the reply. I assured him I made nothing of it. ‘That’s your fault,’ says the fisherman; ‘if I could draw like you, I would make money of it.’ So would I, were I Parmenio.”

Now this is exquisite. SO WOULD I, WERE I PARMENIO. What majestic words! The reader will be quite curious to know the position of a writer who thus modestly mimics the sublime vanity of Alexander. In this little sentence is contained a whole paragraph of pretension. It says quite plainly, “My position in society is so exalted, that in comparison with such men as Reynolds* and Rubens,† I am as the conqueror of

* I declare I think, of all the polite men of that age, Joshua Reynolds was the finest gentleman.—*Thackeray*.

† Rubens was an honourable and entirely well-intentioned man, earn-

the world to one of his generals ;” or, stated like a question in the Rule of Three ; as Alexander was to Parmenio, so am I to—any painter you please. Is it a prince who speaks thus haughtily ? I turn to the title-page, and find that the book was written by one Doctor Macculloch, a wandering geologist.

An impression prevails in England that artists have a better position in France. This is partly true and partly a mistake. From what I have seen, personally, across the channel, I should say that the position of a painter in France, as compared with his position here, is, on the whole, very little better, except after fame is won, and then I grant that no place in Europe is pleasanter for an artist than Paris, if his art be of a kind that the Parisians can understand. I remember two lines in *L'Honneur et l'Argent*, which indicate very well the position of a *great* artist in France ; but I also remember a good many other passages, in that and other books, which indicate with equal clearness the national contempt for the artistic aspirant, or even for the consummate workman whose power has not as yet obtained public recognition. The two lines I shall quote first are spoken by a charming young French lady, excited to enthusiasm by a disinterested and honourable action.

“ C'est plus qu'un grand artiste, et plus qu'un grand seigneur
Plus qu'un homme opulent ; c'est un homme d'honneur.”

Now it certainly would never occur to an English girl who happened to be seeking for superlatives of human greatness by comparison with which to exalt a man

estly industrious, simple and temperate in habits of life, high-bred, learned and discreet.—*Ruskin*.

she admired ; it would occur, I say, to no English girl to put a great artist and a great nobleman side by side as examples of the highest human dignities, and I consider these lines therefore valuable on account of their peculiarly French view of the matter.

In the first act of the *Fiammina*, too, by Mario Uchard, there is a charming conversation between a father and his son, which gives an agreeable idea of the successful artist's life. The father, "Daniel Lambert," is a celebrated painter ; the son, a young poet. It is to be regretted, by the way, that M. Uchard should have selected that particular name for his great artist, it being already the property of a celebrity great in quite another sense. Henri, the son, says to his father :—

"Tu es le premier peintre du temps ; grâce à toi je suis riche, ton nom est un talisman pour moi, il me souffle du bonheur comme au temps des fées ; toutes les portes s'ouvrent devant lui : 'C'est le fils de Daniel Lambert,' dit-on sur mon passage, et l'on te fête en moi, je suis ton clair de lune, je te reflète."

DANIEL.

Mais tu as bien tes rayons à toi.

HENRI.

Rayons d'emprunt Je me sens bien humble devant cette considération qui me vient toute de toi, et me réduit à rien. Quand on dit, par exemple : "C'est Lambert le fils," il me semble que ce mot de fils est placé là comme une sentinelle qui crie : "Halte-là ! ne confondez pas : celui-ci n'est pas le célèbre."

It is also observable that when Lord Dudley, a distinguished English "patron," comes to see Lambert, his manner is anything but patronising. Lambert, for reasons I cannot stop to explain, declines the com-

mission Lord Dudley has come to offer, requesting him to pardon the refusal. On this his lordship answers :—

“ Je ne saurais vous en vouloir, monsieur ; je venais en solliciteur, et je n'ai pas perdu ma journée, puisque j'ai eu l'honneur de vous voir.”

Which is all very civil and polite.

In the third act Henri challenges Lord Dudley, and in the course of their conversation. I find an expression which we have met with elsewhere. Henri says, page 85 :—

“ Je pourrais avoir recours à un de ces outrages publics qui ferment toute retraite, mais entre gens de notre monde, un tel éclat ferait rechercher la cause de mon agression, et c'est ce que je veux éviter à tout prix.”

The expression “ de notre monde ” is what I allude to. We have already met with it in a letter addressed by Miss Ethel Newcome to her uncle the Colonel, in which she says that artists are *not* “ *de notre monde*.” The coincidence is curious. Here we have the son of a French artist talking to a rich English lord as if he considered himself in every way his lordship's equal. He is, however, not merely the son of a painter, but of a very famous one, which, in France, is quite as good as a patent of nobility. Yet, when I have granted that celebrated artists are respected at Paris, I cannot admit that the great body of painters get more consideration there than they do here, or that true art is better loved for itself by our neighbours than by us.

The destruction of the old French noblesse has, as everybody knows, given a character to French society which makes it less than ever like our own. There are,

however, some country towns in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire where a new society, in default of hereditary leaders of ancient descent, accepts for its chief class an aristocracy of recent origin and precarious tenure, based on the fluctuating revenues of commerce. The spirit of speculation in money matters, which is strong enough in these towns to cause great vicissitudes in families, is yet more powerful at Paris, and there is not a place in Europe where the effects of money may be better studied than there. Accordingly much labour and ability have been devoted, by several eminent French writers, to the analysis of money-power in its relation to life in all its forms—to artistic life amongst the rest. What the modern financial aristocracy of France thinks of artists we will try to gather from Ponsard and others. Balzac and Edmond About will tell us what the vulgar *bourgeoisie* thinks. As for what the old noblesse thought on the subject, that is quite simple, and need not detain us; it looked on all artists as handicraftsmen, and therefore contemptible.

Since the days of Horace the world has regarded with suspicion the praises of critics who have just plentifully feasted at a poet's table, and Horace's satire is no less applicable to the case of painters. Dilettants are, however, much more likely than artists to become the victims of these post-prandial eulogies, partly, perhaps, because artists do not give so many dinners as dilettants, but mainly because true artists cannot bear to hear themselves praised by ignorant "*connoisseurs*," (who are always icily indifferent to the peculiar excellencies of individual artists, and who, when they praise, cause the

keenest suffering their feebleness is capable of inflicting,) and wise painters therefore most carefully avoid showing their work to miscellaneous company. But you can never dine with a thorough dilettant without having to look at his sketches, which of course you are expected to extol, and if you cannot do this eloquently enough it is your own fault, you should have drunk more wine. The first scene in that immortal comedy of Ponsard, "*L'Honneur et l'Argent*," is of this familiar kind. Alas, how many times have we not all passed through similar ordeals !

ACTE PREMIER.

Huit heures du soir.—Un riche salon, chez GEORGE.

SCÈNE PREMIÈRE.

GEORGE, *amis et convives de GEORGE.*

[On sort de la salle à manger, pour entrer dans le salon.—Le café est servi sur une table, au milieu du salon.]

PREMIER AMI, à GEORGE.

Mon cher, votre dîner était fort bon.

GEORGE.

Vraiment ?

PREMIER AMI.

Je ne connais que vous pour traiter galamment.

GEORGE.

C'est à mon cuisinier qu'en appartient la gloire.

PREMIER AMI.

Non ; pas plus qu'au soldat n'appartient la victoire.
Les cuisiniers savants ne se voient pas partout ;
On n'en trouve, mon cher, que chez les gens de goût.

DEUXIÈME AMI.

[Regardant des aquarelles posées sur une table, à gauche.]
Bien ! très bien !—De qui donc, George, ces aquarelles ?

GEORGE.

De moi.

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Bravo, mon cher !—Ces eaux sont naturelles,
Comme cet horizon fuit bien dans ce fond clair !
Et comme en ce feuillage on sent frissonner l'air !

PREMIER AMI.

Ce sol est vigoureux.

TROISIÈME AMI.

Cette lumière est chaude.

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Cette feuille au soleil luit comme une émeraude.

GEORGE.

Vous me flattez.

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Non pas ; je ne suis point flatteur :

C'est mon avis.

GEORGE.

Messieurs, je suis un amateur,
Rien de plus, et n'ai pas l'orgueil insupportable
De me faire passer pour peintre véritable.

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Pourquoi donc ? Je connais des peintres en renom
Qui ne vous valent pas, cher ami ; ma foi, non !

PREMIER AMI.

Quel malheur qu'il soit riche et travaille à ses heures !
Pauvre, il eût encor fait des choses bien meilleures.

GEORGE.

Là vraiment, croyez-vous, tout compliment à part,
Qu'au besoin je vivrais des produits de mon art ?

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Parbleu ! vous vous feriez vingt mille francs de rente.

GEORGE.

Oh ! vingt mille francs !

PREMIER AMI.

Oui, vingt mille,—et même trente.

UN HOMME D'ÉTAT.

C'est bel et bon ; je crois que vous peignez fort bien :
Mais laissez donc cela, George, à ceux qui n'ont rien.
Qu'un pauvre diable à jeun, n'ayant ni sou, ni livre,
Barbouille bien ou mal quelques toiles pour vivre,
Je ne l'en blâme pas ;—quoiqu'il pût, selon moi,
D'une toile en bon fil faire un meilleur emploi.
Mais vous, riche, honoré, qu'on recherche et qu'on fête,
Ce sont d'autres projets qu'il faut vous mettre en tête.
—J'étais au ministère, où l'on parla de vous :
Pourquoi, me disait-on, ne vient-il pas à nous ?
Il ne sied pas aux fils des grands propriétaires
De vivre, comme il le fait, en dehors des affaires.
Voyez-le ; dites-lui que nous lui trouverons
Un poste convenable, où nous le pousserons
—Une sous-préfecture ?

GEORGE.

Oh ! je vous remercie.

L'HOMME D'ÉTAT.

Le conseil d'Etat ?

GEORGE.

Non.

L'HOMME D'ÉTAT.

Ou la diplomatie ?

GEORGE.

Non, non. J'aime les arts, et je me sens peu fait
Pour être conseiller, diplomate ou préfet.

The best bit here is what the statesman says :—

“It's pretty and good. I believe you paint very well.
But leave all that, George, to those who have nothing.
A poor hungry devil without a halfpenny may daub well
or ill a few canvasses to get his living—I don't blame
him for it—though he might, in my opinion, find a
better use for a piece of good canvass. But *you*, rich and

honoured, whom people seek after and are delighted to receive—we must put other projects into *your* head.”

The reader will perceive that this bears a wonderful resemblance to what Clive Newcome's friends used to say to him. It sounds like Mr. Honeyman, though that divine would scarcely have put the matter so forcibly as the statesman does. Why art should only be pursued by penniless persons I do not clearly see ; on the contrary, as I shall show in another place, artists seldom do anything great until they cease to be penniless, and art is, of all professions, the one where private fortune is most desirable and useful. The views of the statesman, however, and indeed of the majority of men who think themselves and their doings of much importance to the world, may be more nakedly expressed thus : “ Painting is a foolish and trifling occupation, which, like standing on one's head in the street for chance halfpence, may yet be pardoned in a man who is compelled to degrade himself by sheer hunger ; but in a man of fortune, to whom all careers are open, the choice of such a low trade is quite unpardonable.” I believe this to be a very just and not exaggerated statement of the opinion of society on this question, both here and on the Continent.

In the fourth act, George, like a certain truly noble English marquis, has sacrificed his own fortune to pay his father's debts ; and now we have a second short conversation about art which offers rather a strong contrast to the first. It appears that George has not found his artistic projects quite so encouraging, when success would have been of some use to him, as in the days when flatterers drank his wine and praised his work. An

is is the way these amiable friends speak of that art
ow which they once appreciated so warmly.

A C T E IV.

SCÈNE II.

DEUXIÈME AMI, *au premier.*

Sais-tu qui j'ai cru reconnaître ?

—George.

PREMIER AMI.

Que devient-il ? que fait-il ?

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Je ne sais ;

Je ne l'ai rencontré qu'une fois, l'an passé.

PREMIER AMI.

On le dit ruiné.

DEUXIÈME AMI.

C'est vrai. Le pauvre diable
S'est mis dans un état tout-à-fait pitoyable.

PREMIER AMI.

Comment cela ?

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Que sais-je ? Il s'est conduit . . . fort bien ;
On parle d'un . . . beau trait.—En somme, il n'a plus rien.

PREMIER AMI.

Et comment donc vit-il ?

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Diable, si je m'en doute !

—Il barbouillait jadis quelque méchante croûte . . .

PREMIER AMI.

Parbleu ! je m'en souviens de reste ; quel ennui
Il fallait voir cela, quand on dînait chez lui.

DEUXIÈME AMI.

Eh bien ! il a, dit-on, essayé de les vendre ;
Mais, baste ! aucun marchand n'aura voulu les prendre.

TROISIÈME PERSONNAGE (*troisième ami*).

Je le crois certes bien ; pauvre George ! Entre nous,
C'est les payer trop cher que d'en donner vingt sous.

I fear, indeed, from an avowal made to Rodolphe, at the end of the third act, that Monsieur George was no more of an artist than Mr. Gowan in "Little Dorrit," or our old friend Clive Newcome. When Rodolphe thus eloquently suggests the consolations of art—

Et l'art, qui t'ouvre ses domaines !
L'art, ce consolateur des misères humaines !
L'art, cet ami fidèle, et ce constant appui,
Qui ne trahit pas ceux qui se donnent à lui !
Les devoirs du ménage embarrassent l'étude ;
Un véritable artiste en fuit la servitude,
Et libre, travaillant quand il est inspiré,
Il va, revient, voyage et s'arrête à son gré :
La gloire est à ce prix.

George answers—

Je ne voulais la gloire
Que pour voir dans ses yeux l'orgueil de ma victoire.
Que m'importe de plaire à des gens inconnus ?
Pour qui serai-je fier des succès obtenus ?
Qui plaindra mes revers ? qui soutiendra mon zèle ?
—Ah ! si je travaillais, ce n'était que pour elle.

And now this motive exists no longer, for George has been refused, since his poverty, by a young lady he was engaged to marry, and who, by order of her father, broke off the engagement when George impoverished himself by his too "romantic" sacrifice, as men of the world are accustomed to call actions of plain duty and honesty. This obedient daughter espouses a great financier, instead of our poor George ; and this financier, soon after his

marriage, ruins himself by his extravagance ; whereat George, in an unchristian, but not unnatural, frame of mind, inwardly rejoices. Rodolphe suggests a nobler vengeance, and higher ground of exultation.

RODOLPHE.

Venge-toi noblement, et qu'elle soit punie
Par le regret d'avoir méconnu ton génie !
—Travaille !

GEORGE.

Ah ! mon génie ! Oui, parlons en un peu.
Je me crus animé de ce souffle de Dieu,
Et, pour quelques dessins que vantaient mes convives,
Je suis peintre, disais-je en mes fiertés naïves !
Or, ce que l'on admirait d'un air si convaincu,
Je n'en puis pas trouver seulement un écu.
Le marchand, vois-tu bien, c'est la pierre de touche ;
Jamais le compliment n'approcha de sa bouche ;
Comme l'enthousiasme est son moindre défaut,
Quand on sort de chez lui, l'on sait ce que l'on vaut,
Et l'on mesure alors la distance profonde
Du véritable artiste à l'artiste du monde.

RODOLPHE.

Peut-être ; mais, pour moi, qui ne te flattais pas,
Je remarque un progrès, et crois que tu peindras.
—Travaille.

GEORGE.

En attendant, je n'ai plus de ressource.
Comment vivre ?

RODOLPHE.

Eh ! parbleu ! n'avons-nous pas ma bourse ?

GEORGE.

Je n'emprunterai pas d'aussi pauvre que moi.

RODOLPHE.

Fi ! le mot est vilain. Ce que j'ai, c'est à toi.

GEORGE.

C'est assez pour toi seul, trop peu pour vivre ensemble.

RODOLPHE.

Puis, tu pourrais donner des leçons, ce me semble.

GEORGE.

Des leçons ?

RODOLPHE.

De dessin.

GEORGE.

Chez des particuliers ?

RODOLPHE.

Oui ; je puis te trouver quelques bons écoliers.

GEORGE.

Des leçons au cachet, ainsi qu'un maître d'arme !

RODOLPHE.

Eh ! mais, je ne vois là rien dont l'honneur s'alarme.

GEORGE.

Être salarié, moi ! Donner des leçons,
Respectueusement, à de petits garçons ;
Préparer les pinceaux des jeunes demoiselles
Dont je corrigerai les chastes aquarelles ;
— Allons donc !

RODOLPHE.

Ah ! voilà. Nous aimons les travaux
Qui doivent faire un jour éclater les bravos ;
Quand à gagner son pain par un travail sans gloire,
D'autant moins glorieux, d'autant plus méritoire,
Fi ! c'est bon pour les gens médiocres. Mon cher
Ecoute bien ceci : c'est l'orgueil qui te perd.

GEORGE.

Professeur de dessin ! Expéditionnaire !
Pourquoi pas portefaix ou commissionnaire ?

I quote all this because, as in the earlier part of the play we had the politician despising painters, now Mon-

sieur George himself just as heartily despises drawing-masters. Why drawing-masters should be more despised than Greek-masters is a curious social problem, but one not difficult of solution. Greek has usually been taught by priests; and the sacerdotal class, in the infancy of civilization, is one of the great twin-powers which rule the world, the other, of course, being the military. But drawing is taught by laymen, and therefore in them the mere teacher is not bound up with the sacred character of priest. And even in France, where Greek-masters are not necessarily clergymen, there remains the important question of the social estimation of the accomplishment taught. Classical learning is imposed on all gentlemen by the sternest tyranny of custom, which therefore places vast power in the hands of those whose business it is to teach the dead languages. There is no escape from them for any one in the rank of gentlemen. The Greek-master and the Latin-master are terrible, inexorable, inevitable as Fate and Death. Not so the drawing-master, *he* is on quite a different footing. The classical master is not only the instructor but the guardian of his pupils, standing *in loco parentis*, and authoritatively claiming respect and obedience. But the drawing-master, as we find him, is rather respectful towards his pupils than respected by them—it is his place to

Donner des leçons,
Respectueusement, à de petits garçons.

He is called upon to treat his pupils with a certain deference, and also with a degree of indulgence, that renders discipline impossible, on pain of losing them altogether. He has, also, in most cases, in addition to these small

patrons, a greater patron to satisfy, namely, the powerful classical master. This contrast between teachers of art and classical teachers is nothing more than a faithful reflection of public opinion outside the school, and will cease to exist whenever the public shall come to consider God's works, which the painter interprets, of as much importance as Greek roots, which the philologist discourses of.

Another matter for remark is the occasion of Rodolphe's suggestion. George finds he cannot draw, *therefore* Rodolphe suggests that he should teach. George has discovered that, for him, art is yet to be learned; therefore, Rodolphe proposes that, *until* George has acquired the art himself, he should live by communicating it to others. Now, I am convinced that the common notion, evidently shared by Rodolphe, that any artist, however bad, is good enough to make a drawing-master of, is a pernicious delusion, having for its inevitable consequences, so long as it shall endure, the ignorance and inefficiency of pupils, wasting utterly their most precious time, and rendering vain and useless a most important branch of education.

As to the art itself, George has lost hope. He says:—

J'envisageais ce but ; mais je n'y puis atteindre ;
Je n'ai pas le talent qu'il faut pour oser peindre.

At last, by the assistance of friends, he becomes a paper manufacturer, and there is an end of his artistic projects.

Le métier qu'on fait bien est toujours le meilleur :
Bon papetier vaut mieux que mauvais barbouilleur.

I find a shade of difference, as to their estimation of artists, between the financial aristocracy and the *bourgeoisie*. The great French financier does not hate the mass of artists; he is too much above them for that, but he pities and despises them. The little bourgeois, however, cannot quite afford to despise a painter, so he hates him. In the *Faux Bonshommes*, Emmeline is astonished that her father, a retired shopkeeper, should have consented to her marriage with Octave, a painter, because "her father did not like artists."

C'est que, voyez-vous, mon père n'aime pas les artistes, et je craignais qu'il ne vous mît dans l'obligation de renoncer à moi ou de suivre une autre carrière.

What follows is very pretty. Edgard, a friend of Octave's, and a brother artist, then asks—

Et, dans ce cas, qu'eussiez-vous conseillé à Octave ?

EMMELINE.

Mais, de demeurer fidèle à la peinture et de m'oublier.

But I shall have to cite what follows in another place.

Emmeline's sister, Eugénie, does not share her notions, but expresses the opinions of this world :—

Ma pauvre sœur ! la sacrifier ! la marier à un artiste ! ce serait affreux ! Oui, monsieur, affreux ! car, je le répète, en dépit de tous vos beaux discours une femme ne peut être heureuse qu'à la condition d'être bien mise, d'avoir voiture et loge à l'Opéra.

EDGARD.

Ah ! mais je ferai donner des billets à Madame Delcroix, et elle prendra l'omnibus.

EUGÉNIE.

L'omnibus ?

EDGARD.

Pas la banquette.

EUGÉNIE.

L'omnibus ! quelle horreur !

Vertillac, Octave's uncle, when Péponet, the father of Emmeline and Eugénie, speaks to him of this nephew Octave, without mentioning him by name, and whom, therefore, Vertillac supposes to be some person unknown to him, appears decidedly to lean to the side of Eugénie and the world in this matter. Péponet has just told Vertillac that he is going to marry his daughter to this young man of whom he has been speaking, when Vertillac very naturally inquires—

Et quelle est la position, l'état social de votre jeune homme ?

PÉPONET.

Il est peintre.

VERTILLAC, *avec dédain.*

Ah !

EDGARD, *à part.*

Aïe !

PÉPONET.

Mais peintre fort distingué déjà !

EDGARD, *appuyant.*

En effet.

VERTILLAC.

Je ne discute pas ce point ; mais peut-être nonobstant eussiez-vous pu trouver quelque chose de mieux.

The reader has observed how instantaneously the mind of Vertillac becomes possessed with the sentiment of disdain when he hears of a painter. This is perfectly true to nature. I have watched people's faces sometimes in real life, as I let fall, on purpose, some hint of friendly relations with painters, and listened for the peculiarly

disdainful intonation of voice which is sure to follow, as in Vertillac's *Ah!* You may sometimes change the colour of a conversation by dropping this word "painter" into it, just as suddenly as a chemist will change the colour of a fluid by dropping something into it from another phial. I have done it sometimes for amusement, and seen lively people become reserved, and courteous people stiff, with a rapidity quite magical. So the authors of "*Les Faux Bonshommes*" are quite right in putting the two little words "*avec dédain*" for the actor's guidance.

PEPONET.

Il est peintre.

VERTILLAC, *avec dédain.*

Ah!

Then, later in the same conversation, after Péponet has disclosed the name of his intended son-in-law, and Vertillac has sworn that Octave shall not have a penny of his, poor Péponet cries out—

Oh! mais voilà qui change terriblement les choses!

VERTILLAC.

Pourquoi? puisque vous croyez à l'avenir de monsieur Octave?

PÉPONET.

Un avenir d'artiste! Je suis votre serviteur!

You see Péponet has no great faith in an artist's expectations when his rich uncle abandons him. So Péponet breaks off Octave's marriage with poor Emmeline, and Mademoiselle Eugénie is not sorry.

C'est égal, ma sœur n'ira pas en omnibus.

Such is the young lady's prudent reflection on this circumstance.

Octave, however, marries Emmeline after all, at last, and succeeds in his art, and gets the riband of the Legion of Honour. Then he has no further need of the services of Monsieur Vertillac ; so, of course, Vertillac comes and reconciles himself with his nephew. As a true man of the world, he could do no less. The first rule in the world's ethics is to remember the fortunate and successful, and to treat them with tenderness.

The "*Ménage de Garçon*," in "*Les Célibataires*" of Balzac, is full of allusions to art and the estimation in which it is held by a society which does not comprehend it. This novel, like all Balzac's works, is full of careful study, and I believe it to be very true to nature. It will lose less by translation than the French plays I have quoted ; and so, as some readers will probably be weary of French by this time, I will translate such passages as seem likely to throw light on our subject.

The book is essentially a comparison between the French military Napoleonic type, of which the British public has yet a lively recollection in the menaces of the French colonels after the attempted assassination of the Emperor, and the French artistic type, with which the British public is, unhappily, not so familiarly acquainted. The comparison is traced out with marvellous skill and minuteness. The book is a terrible one, as all Balzac's books are. Little understood in England, Balzac is supposed to be loose and immoral. He is nothing of the kind ; but he is the most fearfully cool anatomist of human nature that ever dissected a subject. There is

something intensely awful and even repulsive in this masterly use of the lancet, this calm and scientific exposure of the sources of social disease. But to call such a man "immoral" is merely to mistake his nature. He is no more immoral than the science of physiology.

Here is a very pretty picture of domestic life to begin with ; a species of existence, by the way, which no true Briton believes to be at all understood out of his own island. This insular delusion is not by any means a harmless one, inasmuch as it leads to much contempt of our neighbours, and no little self-complacency. The Divine Providence has not denied to the French that happiness in marriage which we believe to be our own peculiar privilege ; and there is a large percentage, even at naughty Paris, of such happy interiors as this :—

"From 1804 to 1808 the *chef de division* lived in a large and beautiful suite of rooms on the Quai Voltaire, close to the Home Office and the Tuileries. A kitchen-maid and a valet were all the servants that Madame Bridau kept, in the days of her splendour. Agatha (Madame B.), who always got up first, went to the market with her kitchen-maid. Whilst the servant-man dusted the room, she looked after breakfast. Bridau never went to the Home Office before eleven o'clock. As long as their union lasted, his wife felt the same pleasure in preparing for him an exquisite breakfast, the only meal that Bridau enjoyed. At all seasons, and however bad the weather was when he left her, Agatha watched her husband out of the window as he went to the Home Office, and did not draw back her head till after he had turned the corner of the Rue du Bac. She

then removed the breakfast-things herself, and gave a glance round the rooms ; then she dressed herself, played with her children, and walked out with them, or received visits, whilst she waited for Bridau's return. When the *chef de division* brought back work of an urgent character, she seated herself by his table, in his study, silent as a statue, and knitting as she watched him at work, watching as long as he watched, then going to bed a minute or two before him. Sometimes the two went to the theatre, occupying boxes belonging to the Home Office. On such occasions they dined at a restaurant, and the sight of the restaurant always gave Madame Bridau that lively pleasure which it gives to those who have never seen Paris. Often obliged to accept those state-dinners that were offered to him as a *chef de division* who directed a department of the Home Office, and that Bridau honourably returned, Agatha obeyed the luxurious fashion of the day ; but, on returning home, she gladly got rid of this external splendour, in resuming there her provincial simplicity. Once a week, every Thursday, Bridau received his friends. On Shrove Tuesday he gave a ball. These few words are the history of all this conjugal life, which had only three great events ; the births of two children, one three years after the other, and the death of Bridau, who perished in 1808, killed by over-work at nights, just when the Emperor was going to appoint him directeur-général, count, and councillor of state."

The two sons mentioned above are the two typical heroes, on a comparison of whose lives and characters the moral of the romance is founded. After their father's

death they are educated at the emperor's expense, their mother receiving a pension of 160*l.* a year ; she has, however, 80*l.* a year of her own. There is another widow lady, a friend of hers, in a position somewhat similar ; so the two widows make an arrangement to live together, and find, on adding up their different sources of income, that they have 480*l.* a year between them. The pet vice of the other widow, Madame Descoings, is the Government lottery, which absorbs a considerable portion of her income. We hear more of this afterwards. She appears much younger than her real age, being a well-preserved specimen of feminine humanity ; but, in giving herself out for a young widow of thirty-six, she does not tell the world that she has had a son, who died in the army, a colonel, at the ripe age of thirty-five, leaving a son, whom his grandmamma sees in secret, and passes off as the son of her defunct husband's first wife.

“Agatha now loved nothing in the world but her children, and only wished to live for them ; she refused to marry again, both from reason and by fidelity. But it is easier for a woman to be a good wife than a good mother. A widow has two tasks, whose obligations are contradictory : she is a mother, and she ought to exercise the paternal power. Few women are strong enough to understand and play this double part. So poor Agatha, in spite of her virtues, was the innocent cause of many misfortunes. In consequence of her lack of shrewdness, and of the too confiding tendencies of innocent souls, Agatha was the victim of Madame Descoings, who plunged her into a fearful misfortune. Madame Descoings continued to buy her favourite numbers, and the

lottery gave no credit to its shareholders. In managing the house, she was able to employ in the lottery the money intended for the use of the house, which she progressively indebted, in the hope of enriching her grandson, her dear Agatha, and the little Bridaus."

In this way Madame Descoings gets them all into a horrible mess, loses a large sum of money, wins not a halfpenny, and then throws herself on poor Agatha's neck and makes a clean breast of it, with many tears and sighs. Agatha does not reproach her at all, but simply sells all her superfluous furniture, discharges her cook, sells three-quarters of her little private annuity of 80*l.*, reducing it thus to 20*l.*, pays everything, and gives notice to her landlord. Then the poor ruined old creature goes and lives in as miserable a part of Paris as she could well choose ; convenient in one respect, however, namely, for its proximity to the school where, by the emperor's directions, her sons are to be educated. Madame Descoings, much more imprudent than dishonest, lives still under the same roof, gives considerable pocket-monies to the little boys she has robbed, to appease her conscience a little, and still buys lottery-tickets in the hope that her pet number may yet turn up and enable her to pay her great debt all at once. By this time she is so thoroughly in the habit of this species of gambling that she contrives to live on forty shillings a month, in order to spend the rest of her income at the lottery.

All these details do not relate to the subject of art, but we are coming to that presently. I mention them as absolutely essential to the full understanding of what follows. This collection of little facts and circumstances,

as Balzac himself says, "may perhaps be the generating causes to which we owe Joseph Bridau, one of the great painters of the present French school."

This Joseph is the younger of the two brothers. Philip, the elder, is the darling of his mother, and, as often happens in such cases, the maternal preference is sadly misplaced.

Philip becomes very expert in all physical exercises. By dint of much pummelling at school he gains by degrees that hardihood and that contempt for pain which are amongst the chief military virtues, but at the same time, says Balzac, "he contracted the greatest aversion for study, for public education will never solve the difficult problem of the simultaneous development of body and mind. Agatha concluded from the merely physical resemblance which existed between herself and Philip that there must be a moral concord also, and firmly expected to find one day in him her own delicacy of sentiment strengthened by his manly force. Philip was fifteen years old when his mother came to establish herself in the wretched rooms in Mazarine Street, and the charm peculiar to boys of this age confirmed her maternal belief. Joseph, three years younger, resembled his father, but the likeness was not an agreeable one. In the first place, his abundant black hair was always badly combed whatever was done to it, whereas, in spite of his vivacity, his brother always remained handsome. Then, though nobody knew by what fatality, but a too continual fatality becomes a habit, Joseph could never keep his things clean: when put into new clothes he made old ones of them directly. The elder,

from self-love, took care of everything belonging to him. Insensibly the mother accustomed herself to scold Joseph, and to give him his brother for example These little things led her heart into the abyss of maternal partiality No one noticed Joseph's tendency to observation. Governed by his taste, the future colourist paid no attention to what concerned him, and during his childhood this resembled torpor so closely that his father had some uneasiness about him Joseph's predisposition for art was developed by a very ordinary occurrence. In 1812, during the Easter holidays, in coming home from a walk with his brother and Madame Descoings, he saw a pupil sketching on the wall the caricature of some master, and admiration nailed him to the pavement before it The morning after, the boy went to the window, noticed the pupils as they entered by the door in Mazarine Street, went downstairs stealthily, and slipped into the long court of the Institute, where he saw statues, busts, and unfinished marbles, terra cottas, and casts that he contemplated feverishly, for his instinct revealed itself, his vocation agitated him."

I am sorry not to have room for the exquisite scene which follows, but if I had room I should certainly translate the whole book. Joseph then enters the *atelier* of the sculptor Chaudet. After a good deal of teasing by the pupils our hero is protected by Chaudet. The pupils have made the unlucky urchin *pose* like a model till he is ready to drop with fatigue. "Arn't you ashamed of yourselves," says Chaudet to his pupils on coming in, "to torture a poor child so?" then, putting

Joseph's arms down, he says to him kindly, "How long have you been there?" giving him at the same time a little friendly tap on the cheek.

"A quarter of an hour."

"And who brought you here?"

"I want to be an artist."

"And where do you come from?"

"I come from mamma's."

"What does your mamma do?"

"She's Madame Bridau. My papa, who is dead, was a friend of the emperor. And the emperor, if you will teach me to draw, will pay whatever you ask."

Chaudet remembers Monsieur Bridau, is very kind to the little boy, and gives him cakes and good things to compensate for his fatigues as model, and a piece of thick paper to draw upon. "This scene, where the fun and the heart of artists revealed itself, and which he understood instinctively, made a prodigious impression on the boy." After some time, the drawing-master at the public school Joseph goes to, discovers his talents, and comes to tell his mother of the discovery. "Agatha, like a country-bred woman who understood the arts as little as she understood housekeeping much, was seized with terror. When the drawing-master went away the widow began to cry. "Ah," said she, when Madame Descoings came in, "I am a lost woman! Joseph, that I wanted to make a clerk of, who had his way already traced for him at the Home Office, where, protected by the shadow of his father, he would have been a head-clerk at twenty-five, well, he wants to turn painter—

trade of a go-bare-foot. I well foresaw that this child would give me nothing but misery."

The widow goes to Chaudet's *atelier*. Chaudet is attacked by fatal disease, he is working on his last statue. He works furiously, feeling the hand of death upon him, and anxious to complete his task. Poor ignorant Agatha thinks he looks like a maniac. Agatha irritates Chaudet by speaking evil of the arts, and complaining about the destiny of her son. Chaudet gets angry, and gives Agatha a lecture. At the close of this lecture Agatha sees a naked woman (the model for the statue) seated in a corner of the *atelier* where the good lady had not looked hitherto, and this spectacle makes her quit the room horrified.

"*And Joseph went there!*" cries the poor mother, frightened out of her wits. That evening she is excessively sad and melancholy. Her friends try to console her for the unspeakable misfortune of having a talented son, but without effect. "What's the use of crying still?" says her friend Madame Descoings.

"Ah, if it were Philip I should have no fears You don't know what goes on in those studios! The artists have naked women in them!" The only answer she can get from Madame Descoings is that she hopes they keep good fires; but this does not console Agatha, who troubles herself much less about the comfort of the models than the morals of her son.

Philip becomes an officer. Joseph sticks to his art. Joseph admires Philip, Philip patronises Joseph. These continually patronising manners of Philip would have hurt Joseph a little, only he believed that hidden trea-

asures of goodness and kindness were concealed under the brutal air of the military class. Joseph did not know as yet that really talented soldiers are just as kind and polite in their manners as other superior people. "Genius," says Balzac here, "is in everything like itself."

Joseph gets leave to turn a big garret into a studio. Madame Descoings gives him some money that he may have the things indispensable to his *trade of painter*, for "in the household of the two widows painting was only a trade." The landlord pays for a skylight, and Joseph colours the walls himself. Agatha, not without regret, puts a little cast-iron stove into this painting-room, so Joseph can work at home now. We are sorry to discover that Philip, his mother's pride, begins to contract a few little habits which are destined to give much anxiety to that tender and simple woman. He loses much time at billiards, and gets into the way of drinking little glasses of different cordials. One of the friends of the family suggests that Philip should procure a place under Government. "Philip is a soldier, he loves only war," says the warlike old lady. Joseph earns some money, and gives Philip eighty pounds to go to America with. This excursion across the Atlantic does not improve the colonel (for Philip is now colonel); he becomes brutal and rude in his manners and besotted in his habits. He is dangerous as a duellist, and a great bully. So he comes back from Texas to live on his mother, on his brother, on the partialities of opera-girls, on anything or anybody, in short, that comes in his way. Still he drinks his innumerable glasses of various cordials, still

he smokes innumerable cigars, but he now stays late at gambling houses and comes home drunk, tottering to bed with noisy songs past his poor mother's chamber, when the foolish partial creature goes and kisses him, without complaining of the compound stink of rum-punch, tobacco, and brandy. However, he gets a place, his mother being surety for him, then robs the money-chest at his office of 440*l.* and pretends he is going to kill himself, to get forgiven, *is* forgiven accordingly, is petted and indulged as before, till the reader gets quite angry at the great lubber and his mother too.

It is at this point in the work that we begin to see what Balzac really thought of the artistic class. Recollecting all the little details of his brother's conduct, Joseph, "with a perspicacity seldom wanting to painters," discovers his true character. But "with the trustfulness natural to artists" he puts money in a skull which stands commonly on the top of a picturesque cabinet Joseph has bought for his painting-room. He finds, however, strange discrepancies between his expenditure and the balance in the skull. The colonel has been helping himself a little from time to time. He also helps himself to Agatha's money, and afterwards rips up a mattress to get some pieces of gold that the other widow has saved for the lottery. This prevents her from buying her pet number the very time it turns up. The colonel, in taking these gold pieces, has thus robbed his mother and her friend at the same time of a large fortune. All this time the artist is devoted in his attention to his mother, but gets no thanks; he is only a painter—the brilliant colonel is pardoned continually, he is the honour of the

family. The poor disappointed widow Descoings dies of a broken heart ; the colonel doesn't allow that to disturb him much. We will not pause on these details of Philip's history, his stealing the copy of a valuable picture, mistaking it, luckily, for the original, and other feats of a like nature. Our business is chiefly with Joseph.

Philip gets into prison at last. Agatha and Joseph go down to Issoudun, a provincial town, to look after some property that an imbecile relative is in danger of leaving to his mistress and her friends. They go to stay with some friends near the house of this relative, who, by the way, is called Rouget. "This is my son, the painter," says Agatha, presenting Joseph, "my *good* Joseph !" but Balzac says of this word "*good*," that it was pronounced with an effort which revealed very plainly the whole heart of Agatha, who was thinking all the time about the Luxembourg prison. Joseph, I am sorry to say, does not make a favourable impression. The old gentleman, the master of the house, tries to compliment him by saying that he has heard of his talent. "Talent !" says Joseph ; "not yet ; but with time and patience perhaps I may gain both fame and fortune."

"By *painting* ?" asks Hochon, with a profound irony. This M. Hochon is a miser, and the description of a dinner which follows is amusing. All the patricians of Issoudun come to see this painter, as they would a wild beast, and they go away astonished by his mocking glances, disquieted by his smiles, or frightened at a face "sinister for people who could not recognise the strangeness of genius."

After this, Joseph tries to gain his point with his relative, but fortune-hunting is not his vocation, and he fails signally. Philip afterwards goes on the same mission, being sent on it by a shrewd lawyer, a friend of the family, who sees that he is the fitter agent of the two, and gets his sentence of imprisonment commuted into an honourable restraint within the walls of a provincial town, which town is of course Issoudun. Philip succeeds in a masterly manner, Rouget dies, Philip forces Rouget's mistress to marry him, and then casts her off, keeping the money. He then lives in great style at Paris, and is promoted to the rank of general and count, but cuts his mother and Joseph altogether, Agatha still adoring him.

A little event occurs during Joseph's visit to Issoudun, which is characteristic. Rouget's father has got together a fine collection of pictures out of the convents at the Revolution. These pictures are at Rouget's when Joseph goes there. To get rid of Joseph, the mistress makes Rouget offer him the pictures. There are seven or eight masterpieces up in the garret, that these good provincials had kept for the sake of their frames. M. Rouget is willing enough to give Joseph the pictures, "if they can be of any use to him in his trade," but he won't let him have the frames on any account, "because they are gilded." Joseph is dazzled with this wonderful good luck, and tells some one, foolishly, something of the *money value* of his acquisitions. Then the people try to get the pictures back again, and Joseph, being thoroughly honourable, returns them, because Rouget was ignorant of their monetary value when he gave

them to Joseph. So Joseph returns to Paris without his pictures after all. Note how this provincial has not the slightest value for the pictures *themselves*, yet wants them back again as soon as he knows they are worth thousands of pounds. Very many connoisseurs and collectors resemble Rouget; they are proud of pictures as of so many bank-notes, caring just as little for the artistic value of the picture as they care for the artistic value of the pretty engravings published by the Bank of England, those curious impressions on thin paper, full of mysterious water-marks, of which everybody would be glad to have a rich private collection.

During the life-time of his wife, Philip tries to marry into a noble family. Just at this juncture his mother writes, to hint, that since he is now rich, he ought to pay what he owes his brother and herself. Philip replies by a short sarcastic note, containing a cutting refusal. Agatha is taken ill. A friend goes to persuade the brilliant man of the world to go and see his mother on her death-bed. Philip laughs at the idea, is very glad the old woman will be so soon out of his way, but is still angry at Joseph for giving to his now noble patronymic the base publicity of artistic fame. The poor old lady dies at last, having understood her fatal error, though too late. The last scenes of her life are so touching, that it is scarcely possible to read them without tears. Philip is killed fighting in Africa, and Joseph inherits the remnant of his fortune (of which the greater part has been dissipated by speculation), and the title of count, which Joseph only laughs at. But what he likes better than either the title or the fortune, are the master-

pieces which he now possesses once more. So far from abandoning his art when he gets rich, as Clive Newcome did, Joseph Bridau only devotes himself to it with the greater zest, and becomes one of the chief masters of the modern school.

In this history we find as a marked characteristic of the people we meet, a characteristic to which Balzac frequently draws our attention himself, that they cannot understand a painter, and that they do not respect him. Joseph's own mother even, the object of his continual filial love and solicitude, cannot consider him anything else than a disgrace to her, and the crimes of that elder son weaken her affection less than the innocent pursuits of this. She and her friend Madame Descoings think of art "only as a trade." Philip himself despises and affects to patronize Joseph. When Joseph goes to Issoudun, the people there cannot make him out at all, and dislike him extremely. Hochon sneers at his art. Joseph's mother presents him to these friends with a tone and manner, which imply how little she loves him or respects his calling. Rouget tells him he may have the pictures "if they can be of any use to him in his trade." Balzac, I fear, is no more encouraging than Thackeray; at the same time, Balzac shows how he himself loves artists, by describing the artistic nature with such tenderness and kind feeling. The character of Joseph Bridau is one of the purest and noblest in French fiction. Simple, generous, affectionate, a good son, a forgiving brother, an unselfish and high-principled man of genius, he is no unworthy ideal of the artistic nature. So in the "Newcomes," poor J. J. is the gentlest.

the humblest, and the most inoffensive creature in the whole book. Very little is said of him, but every time he is mentioned you see that in that little pale and deformed lad dwells a heavenly soul; and Thackeray never rises into such pure strains of eloquence, never so willingly lays aside his lancet of satire, as when he speaks of the butler's boy. In all others, even in the good colonel, he has follies to ridicule or cloaked sins to reveal, but this guileless and meek heart is too holy for dissection. "Whenever you found him he seemed watchful and serene, his modest virgin-lamp always lighted and trim. No gusts of passion extinguished it, no hopeless wandering in the darkness afterwards led him astray. Wayfarers in the world, we meet now and then with such purity, and hush while it passes on."

We painters ought to feel grateful to these two great novelists, for, however faithfully they have described the world's contempt for the painter, they have with equal clearness courageously disclaimed all participation in it. There is, indeed, and must ever be, strong sympathy between true artists, though in different realms of art; and some who work in words, like Balzac and Thackeray, can comprehend and esteem, and also, it appears, even respect, others who express themselves by the less generally understood medium of colours.

M. Edmond About, in the clever "*Mariages de Paris*," gives us the history of a successful young painter who wants to marry the daughter of a rich *bourgeois*. The property of the girl's father consisting in building lots, the story is entitled "*Terrains à vendre*."

After a long speech from the painter to his intended

father-in-law, in which, as is the wont of young gentlemen with similar views, he temptingly dwells on the hopeful state of affairs, he pauses for once to take breath, and then adds " 'Je ne sais, monsieur, si je me suis fait comprendre ' "

" 'Oui, monsieur,' répondit M. Gaillard, 'et, tout artiste que vous êtes, vous m'avez l'air d'un bien honnête homme.' "

" Henri Tourneur rougit jusqu'au blanc des yeux.

" 'Excusez-moi,' reprit vivement le bonhomme ; 'je ne veux pas dire de mal des artistes : je ne les connais pas. Je voulais simplement vous faire entendre que vous raisonnez comme un homme d'ordre, un employé, un négociant, un notaire, et que vous ne professez point la morale cavalière des gens de votre état. Du reste, vous êtes fort bien de votre personne, et je crois que vous plairiez à ma fille si elle vous voyait souvent. Elle a toujours eu un gout prononcé pour la peinture, la musique, la broderie et tous ces petits talents de société.' " A little farther on, he says, " Vous me dites que vous gagnez des montagnes d'or, et je vous crois, bien qu'il me semble assez extraordinaire qu'un seul homme puisse fabriquer pour quatre-vingt mille francs de tableaux en dix-huit mois."

This is all very good, especially the sentence where the bourgeois says that his daughter has always had a strong taste for painting, and music, and embroidery, and all those little "*talents de société*."

I think I have quoted enough to prove my point. First of all, I said that men respected only power, and did not respect artists because they were not powerful. Then I had to prove that they did not respect artists,

and so called a few witnesses who happened to be at hand. I do not want to weary the jury, and so shall call no more witnesses. There is no need.

The reader perhaps fancies that I must have been at great pains to collect from modern literature so much telling evidence on this matter; but I have quoted only from such works as I had at hand, here in my island. I am far from a public library. I have not very many books of my own, only a few modest bookshelves, filled with good literature, but nothing like a library. From these shelves, I have taken some volumes that I happened to remember as likely to afford evidence on my subject, and how much evidence have I found! What a wonderful unanimity in all these witnesses! It is difficult to find a writer who can mention painters without telling us that they are, as a class, contemptible. And just as I have often heard people say in society, "he is an artist, *but* quite a superior sort of man," or "he is a painter by profession, but really very like a gentleman;" so whenever these writers happen to speak favourably of a painter, something of that sort is sure to follow, as for instance, "tout artiste que vous êtes, vous m'avez l'air d'un bien honnête homme."

"Then, if painting is so degrading a pursuit in the world's opinion, why did you follow it yourself?" thinks the reader.

Merely because, in this matter, I choose to act independently of the world's opinion, not, as you see, because I am ignorant of it. God knows, I have heard it often enough enunciated. The world may look upon my art as a degradation, but I happen to think differently.

And even when I first devoted my life to art I did it with my eyes open. Blinded by no boyish enthusiasm, I knew that to give my energies to its advancement, was to close for ever the paths of ambition, and to forfeit the respect of men. Then, calmly balancing the two lives together, the world's life on the one hand, and the artist's on the other, and patiently listening to, and duly considering all that my friends had to say about the degradation of a painter's lot (and my friends were not silent, I assure you, any more than Clive Newcome's), I accepted the lot and its degradation together, and am content therewith.

You see I had other ideas. The painter's present relation to society, I used to say to myself, is not of much consequence. I do not concern myself so much with the painter's relation to others, as with his relation to himself. And I think the inward satisfaction of a true painter's life sweet beyond all expression, so that the external bitterness of his position may be borne quite cheerfully by him. And though, whilst I have been writing this essay, a good many discouraging considerations have been forced upon me, their practical effect on my daily work is absolutely nothing, and my pleasure and ardour in study are not weakened by them in the least.

Nor am I at all capable of deluding myself with the notion, that I may ultimately make myself respected by the acquisition of fame. Carefully observing the degree to which artistic reputation penetrated the society I lived in, I always perceived that unless I came to be amongst the really *popular* painters, the noise of my success would never reach the ears of my friends at all. They had

heard of Landseer, of course ; they had a vague idea that a man called Stansfield, or Stanfield, painted ships ; and they had heard of Turner, but were not quite sure whether he painted in oils, or was "a water-colour man." I soon found that the fame of Leslie and Mulready had not penetrated this society. The reader perhaps thinks I lived with a low set. Not at all ; the persons I speak of, whether classified by their wealth and rank, or by their general intellectual culture, would hold a sound, and in many instances even distinguished position in any society in Europe. More recently my estimate of the immense difficulty of getting anything like general fame by painting, has been very frequently confirmed. On the publication of Leslie's Autobiography, the book being, for various reasons, interesting to me, I could not help talking about it a little ; but had generally to explain that the late Mr. Leslie was a painter, and a friend of mine, by way of accounting for my interest in him. This does not in any way astonish me now. These persons are not necessarily ignorant or uncultivated, merely because they have never heard of Leslie or Mulready—they are only uninterested in painting, *voilà tout !*

When a young gentleman talks of devoting himself to art, he will always hear the most alluring descriptions of other professions. I suspect that people are sometimes employed by the young artist's friends thus to seduce him from his purpose. I remember lawyers offered to start me well at the bar ; literary acquaintances, with delicate flattery, hinted that art was too narrow a field ; clerical teachers elegantly described the easy life of Oxonian fellows ; one fair lady longed to hear me preach,

and another ardently desired to behold me in a uniform.* It was often suggested that (a rich) marriage was a very pleasant and lucrative profession; and, it being discovered that I was not frightened out of my wits by a large audience, one gentleman tried to win me from art by offering to push me into Parliament. And long after I had definitively entered on my chosen pursuit, a very good and valued friend tried quite earnestly to persuade me to turn entertainer, like Albert Smith. I was to get up an entertainment, on the Highlands and Scotch tourists, with songs and bagpipes, and appropriate scenery. At last, when I had prepared myself, by long and careful discipline, for my calling, another friend proposed seriously that I should get a place in a Government office. In short, I was fit for anything, no matter what, so that it were not painting. During the period of studentship, I never could make anybody understand that I had any serious intention to pursue art as a profession. I was forced at last, much against my will, to pass for an "amateur," and, therefore, it is probable that in that character, I may have escaped some of those slights from rich or titled friends which Clive Newcome had to put up with.

* I yielded so far to these solicitations as to accept a commission in a militia regiment, had the honour of being promoted to the rank of captain, and then ignominiously resigned. My brother officers went into camp at Aldershott. I went into camp too, but for a different purpose, and alone. A singular proof of the extent to which sensible people are often prevented by fashion from seeing things according to the facts is, that the friends who marvelled at and the strangers who despised my camp life in the Highlands for its hardship or its un-respectability, would have thought it quite natural and in the highest degree respectable, if I had accompanied my regiment to Aldershott—the only difference being that at Aldershott I should have had a captain's accommodation, whilst in the Highlands I had a general's.

And, indeed, when I look only on the outward advantages of different professions, I think my friends acted faithfully by me in suggesting other pursuits than art. I am a customer of Mr. Simpkin, the grocer, but I do not presume to entitle myself his patron. Yet if Mr. Simpkin were to buy one of my pictures, he would become my "patron" in the world's eyes, and an unequal relation would be established between us, in which his share would be proud and glorious, and mine, to say the most of it, humble.

Or suppose an attorney should purchase a picture from me, the world would call him my patron. Then, if I buy law parchments from him, am I therefore his patron? Quite the reverse, I am his *client*. So that in every professional transaction which can possibly take place between us, whether I sell him the product of my skill and labour, or he sells me the product of his, the superiority rests with him.

Yes, the fatal objection to the pursuit of art is in fact the degradation of "patronage," which proud and sensitive gentlemen won't submit to. But "patronage" need never hurt the susceptibilities of any painter whose private fortune, however inconsiderable in amount, is sufficient for his real wants; and most men who go into the army, as officers, have some private resources of this nature. A man who has a hundred a year clear, and can live on ninety, need never suffer the slightest insolence on the part of any purchaser.

It is, however, a very sound objection to the pursuit of art as a profession, by young men entirely without other sources of income, that the position and attitude hitherto

commonly assumed by the customers of painters in their dealings with those artists, have not been of the right character. When the intrinsic value of modern pictures shall be better understood, the prices they will fetch will no longer be dependent on the caprice of individual purchasers. The essence of "patronage" is the impression on the part of the purchaser that his money is a sort of *largesse*, or free gift, bestowed on the artist for his encouragement, and not in any wise money strictly due, every halfpenny of it, for value received. And, in truth, much of the money given to Haydon was merely alms, and a great part of modern picture-buying has, until very recently, been only almsgiving. But, in paying a lawyer's bill, for instance, however exorbitant it may appear to the landowner who has it to pay, the landowner has not the slightest intention of doing an act of charity to the legal gentleman. No man in his senses ever goes to law except when he cannot help himself. Besides, the laws of Great Britain force all who possess property to employ lawyers, for, in all matters relating to real estate, you can take no important step without their aid. They enjoy therefore much social power, and call us their "clients" quite condescendingly. And if painters only knew how to make themselves indispensable to all men in their common affairs, *they* also might patronise their customers. Be assured that when people really have need of you they will abandon these airs of patronage, which are only assumed by men towards those whom they can afford to neglect. Lady Bareacres laid aside her dignity when she needed Becky Sharp's horses; impelled by *fear*, she begged this favour of Becky. But

how will fear ever drive Lady Bareacres to buy a pair of my pictures? I confess I do not clearly see how this is to come about. My pictures cannot deliver her ladyship's person from any bodily peril, and if she deigns to purchase them I know very well she will assume the position of a patroness.

The relation of patron and client in old Rome was that of a superior and an inferior leagued together for mutual service; but the superiority of the patron was never forgotten, and the client, at best, was only what we call a humble friend. The two words have descended to us, and I find in them an expressive illustration of the position of art. The attorney's customer is called his "client," implying the inferiority of the customer; the painter's customer is called his "patron," implying the inferiority of the painter. So our very language has come to reflect this contrast.

Society is generally quite ignorant of the painter's true character, and can therefore only judge him externally, as the children judged the philosopher whom they found blowing soap-bubbles. This philosopher was investigating the laws of light, an occupation certainly not unworthy of intellectual maturity; but the children *saw* that he was blowing soap-bubbles, and derided him for a silly old trifler. So a great landscape-painter investigates in *his* way the laws of light, and puts the result down on paper or canvass in a manner that not one man in ten thousand can comprehend, and the grown-up children of his epoch, seeing that he produces something with his hands, set him down at once as a handicraftsman, and despise him.

How would unlettered peasants judge the greatest literary celebrities of this age? Reputation, celebrity, indeed! O vanity of vanities! The immense majority of mankind are deaf to the trumpets of fame. How shall the fame of a poet reach those who have never heard of a poem? How shall a novelist's rank in literature be understood by people who never heard of a novel? . My man Thursday, seeing me scribble this the other evening, when the table was covered with the sheets of this essay, was astonished at the quantity I had written. "The man who wrote those forty-eight volumes there on the shelf was a cleverer man than I am, and wrote a great deal more. He made a deal of money by writing. You never heard of his name? He was called Scott—Sir Walter Scott." "No, sir, I never heard that name before." Thursday does not know what a novel is. He found one on the road the other day, but could make nothing of it, saying, "it was the queerest book he had ever seen, and he didn't believe a word of it." So I gave him a little book on sheep in exchange for his novel, to his great contentment. Now, fancy a society composed of persons like Thursday, and fancy a great novelist like Thackeray in such a society, would his character of novelist be of any use to him? Would he not be judged of and classed by the quality of his coat, and would not his literary achievements be entirely set aside and ignored, as giving no claim to consideration? And in a society which knows as little of art as Thursday does of literature, is it to be expected in the nature of things that men should get consideration because they are artists? The painter is judged from the *outside* by the mass of

society, which knows nothing of his aspirations, and can neither see what he is aiming at nor judge of his success. And externally the painter is a mere workman, *working with his hands*. He is powerless among men, and lives by manual labour.

The gradations of capacity for appreciating art seem infinite. We will note the more marked differences in a descending order, according to their degrees of intelligence. The relation of the painter to society can never be truly understood until we can ascertain how many come within his influence. And the influence of art is one of the most delicate and partial in the world, just as that of money is the strongest and most universal. Thus Ruskin says of Turner:—

“Now the condition of mind in which Turner did all his great work was simply this: ‘What I do must be done rightly; but I know, also, that no man now living in Europe cares to understand it; and the better I do it the less he will see the meaning of it.’ There never was yet, so far as I can hear or read, isolation of a great spirit so utterly desolate. Columbus had succeeded in making other hearts share his hope, before he was put to hardest trial; and knew that, by help of Heaven, he could finally show that he was right. Kepler and Galileo could demonstrate their conclusions up to a certain point; so far as they felt they were right, they were sure that, after death, their work would be acknowledged. But Turner could demonstrate nothing of what he had done—saw no security that, after death, he would be understood more than he had been in life. Only another Turner could apprehend Turner. Such praise as he

received was poor and superficial ; he regarded it far less than censure. My own admiration of him was wild in enthusiasm, but it gave him no ray of pleasure ; he could not make me at that time understand his main meanings ; he loved me, but cared nothing for what I said, and was always trying to hinder me from writing, because it gave pain to his fellow-artists. To the praise of other persons he gave not even the acknowledgment of this sad affection ; it passed by him as the murmur of the wind ; and most justly, for not one of his own special powers was ever perceived by the world."

"Only another Turner could apprehend Turner." Of course, for no one can comprehend any artist who is inferior to him in knowledge.

Yet there may be a closer approximation to understanding, as the spectator approximates more closely to the painter's position relatively to nature. And there is a wider and wider misapprehension as the ignorance of the spectator becomes darker and deeper.

An artist always classifies the rest of the world something in this manner. He knows in an instant the class of person he has to deal with, and treats him accordingly. With the first class, he holds free and equal intercourse ; to the second, he will pay the compliment of a respectful attention ; but with any of the others no true artist can endure to talk of his art. He will change the subject whenever you bring it forward, and talk of any other, no matter what, so that it be not that sacred one. This has given rise to the notion that good painters are always silent respecting their art. So they are ; but they would talk of it all day long, if they could find fit audience.

CLASS I.

BRETHREN. There is an understanding of artists possible only to their great brethren, as, for instance, Velasquez understood Titian; an understanding reaching very far, which would appreciate not only most intellectual but *all* technical qualities, with a justice impossible to the most cultivated critic.

CLASS II.

TRUE CRITICS. There is the true critic's appreciation of a great painter, as Ruskin's of Turner; having less of sympathy, but more of veneration; and being also far easier to express in words, as attaching itself pre-eminently to intellectual things.

CLASS III.

INFERIOR ARTISTS. Their less intelligent admiration of the great artist is almost invariably based on a desire to rival his technical skill, and very seldom rises to sympathy with his genius.

CLASS IV.

CONNOISSEURS. This class includes many varieties. Here are its two principal divisions:—

Connoisseurs in old masters. Generally mere collectors of rarities; caring little about art, and nothing about nature, to which they make no reference. Such persons are intolerable to artists, because they are always

repeating foolish rules and traditions, which would be the ruin of any living painter if he listened to them.

Connoisseurs in modern art. They read "Modern Painters." Ruskin teaches them that they ought to refer all to nature, which they accordingly try to do, but generally with little success. For Nature, as a reference, has this peculiarity, that her oracles are never intelligible except to the initiated. These connoisseurs have, however, one great advantage over the others, they are always learning something. The best-informed of them are sincerely respected by painters, having, at least, an intelligent interest in the art.

CLASS V.

Persons who suppose that art is only the mirror of money. A painter, in the conception of these people, is a workman employed to produce durable images of rich men, their wives, children, horses, dogs, &c., and to perpetuate their similitude to posterity.

This notion of art is still not altogether contemptible because it still recognises something like a historical recording function in the artist, though it would employ him to record commonplace and often unworthy objects such, for instance, as "gentlemen's seats."

CLASS VI.

I find a vast body of people, both in England and the Continent, who look upon pictures as a fashionable sort of furniture. This class does great harm to art, encouraging its most meretricious forms.

CLASS VII.

I find people who will not have pictures, even for furniture, but prefer looking-glasses and gaudy paper-patterns. Still, when they meet with pictures in other people's houses, they look at them, and seem to enjoy them a little.

CLASS VIII.

Separated from the preceding ones by its *absolute indifference to landscape*. This class, however, can still retain a certain degree of interest in men and animals.

I observed a little boy of eighteen months the other day, in a room full of pictures. He recognised the dogs at once, uttering the sound with which he was accustomed to greet a living dog, a friend of his; but the landscapes, of course, he passed without comprehending what they meant. Many people never get beyond this, and remain little boys of eighteen months all their lives long.*

* "J'ai suivi, quelquefois, à travers les galeries de l'Exposition, le public curieux et intelligent des dimanches. Son instinct le mène tout droit aux scènes dramatiques ou comiques dans lesquelles l'homme est en jeu: quelquefois il s'arrête devant les animaux qui lui semblent bien imités; *il ne tient pas plus de compte des paysages que s'ils faisaient partie de la décoration de la salle* . . . le livre le mieux écrit n'est intéressant que pour celui qui sait lire. Il faut avoir reçu une éducation pour s'intéresser aux beautés silencieuses de la terre. Inutile d'être grand clerc pour s'apitoyer sur un Pierrot qui meurt ivre; mais un bel arbre coupé dans sa sève et saignant au bord du chemin, ne représente aux yeux de bien des gens qu'un certain nombre de bûches et de fagots. Je dis plus: l'éducation ne suffit pas; il faut le calme, la quiétude, une certaine harmonie de l'homme avec la nature."—*Edmond About*.

CLASS IX.

I have found a curious instance of incapacity to recognise *houses*, when represented pictorially, in a person who yet took much pleasure in the portraiture of men and animals. There is, probably, an entire class of this kind. It is lower than the preceding one, because indifference to landscape is very common with people who yet look with interest at drawings of houses or churches.

The case I allude to was that of a country labourer, who had lived for twenty years close to an old house, and been employed there most of the time as a farm-servant. There were three gables in the front of the house, and each gable had a stone ball on its apex, and one at each angle of its base. I drew the house very carefully several times, but never could make this peasant guess what the drawing was intended for, although almost as accurate as a photograph, and detailed with the most servile fidelity.

CLASS X.

There is a class incapable of distinguishing *animals*. This is a much lower class than the preceding one—lower, I should say, than the majority of our population. A lady told me that her maid, on seeing a fine lithograph of cows, after Rosa Bonheur, had inquired what they were meant for, “whether they were meant for horses, or what?” The cows in the lithograph, which I have seen, are full-grown, and furnished with horns.

CLASS XI.

Entirely incapable of recognising any object whatever in pictorial representation. A friend of mine, who has served at the Cape, told me, the other day, that this incapacity is universal amongst the Caffres. One of his brother-officers, a clever draughtsman, showed a sketch of a cow to a Caffre, who, after looking at it very attentively, said, "That's what you make when you mean *a stone*." He supposed drawing to be a kind of writing, in which symbols were employed; but recognised no appearance of imitation; and my friend tells me that all the Caffres he has seen are alike in this respect.

CLASS XII.

FALSE CRITICS. In Society: people who, indifferent to art, affect to criticise to display their wit; but criticise always insincerely, and with utter recklessness, not thinking justice due either to the art or to themselves.

In Literature: dishonest writers, who make a trade of the same kind of criticism, by putting it into writing, instead of conversation, and selling it in the literary market.

Both these varieties of false critics do infinite harm to art. Incapable of discrimination, they are forced to fall back upon tradition, if they would acquire authority. They perpetuate ancient error, and impede new truth. And as all great artists advance their art by pushing it on into new realms of nature, it is, of course, against

these great ones that the malice of false critics is most particularly directed.

I put these creatures below the Caffres, because, although the Caffres do not understand art, they, at least, do not try to hinder others from understanding it, and it would, therefore, have been unjust not to have given them the precedence.

It is possible that the faculty which perceives pictorial truth may be wanting in richer people than our poor domestics. Why not? But the difference is that a rich lady, who, on seeing a picture of Rosa Bonheur's, found herself unable to decide whether the animals in it were meant for cows or horses, would at once try to shield her ignorance under forced expressions of a feigned delight in the artistic qualities of Rosa Bonheur; whereas the poor maid-servant asked innocently what the things in the lithograph were meant for, being quite unaware that it was fashionable to admire Rosa Bonheur, and having no idea that non-appreciation of that lady's talent was in any way a thing to be concealed.

But this variety of natural endowment, although studiously dissimulated by all who feel themselves deficient, and live in a sufficiently elevated sphere to know that this deficiency is not a credit to them, must, of course, render the position of artists less generally reliable than that of men who, in this respect more fortunate, devote themselves to pursuits which everybody understands. For instance, suppose that two gentlemen enter a room at the same time, one of them a great artist, the other a great banker. Of the company in the room, perhaps two or three may know something of the grounds

on which the fame of the painter is founded, but the majority cannot know this, and must take his reputation on hearsay. This reputation will in all probability be a contested one, for a painter's reputation is never uncontested during his lifetime, if he be truly great, and therefore an innovator, or discoverer of new truth. And contested reputations cannot command *respect*, which is based upon general unanimity of sentiment. But the banker's fame, on the contrary, stands upon a tangible basis, intelligible to every Englishman. The theory of banking is known to everybody, and the qualities and powers which enable men to practise it successfully, especially the indispensable condition of abundant capital, are quite easily appreciated by all men of business. Fame may be awarded by the enthusiasm of a few, but respect is only paid by the general consent. Thus artists may be famous because their admirers make a noise about them ; but they are rarely respected, because their peculiar greatness can never be generally comprehended. Respect is a plant of sensitive character and tender growth, soon chilled or blighted by adverse winds, and attaching itself to solid, visible greatness, rooted in the common earth. It clings to money, because all men know the power of money : it attaches itself to ancient titles and offices which the people have heard of daily for twenty generations. But the popular respect will not adhere to things which the people distrust as uncertain and ephemeral. And the fame of artists is uncertain to those who cannot perceive its grounds, and ephemeral to all who cannot foresee its duration. Shrewd men, too, know that half the popular reputa-

tions have turned out mistakes, and wisely withhold their votes.

It is also unfortunate for art, that all artistic genius in the higher classes is arrested in its developement by the severity of social law. It would be extremely unfair to the English aristocracy to affirm that it is absolutely devoid of all artistic genius, and yet, if true artists have been born within its ranks, not one of them has ever yet forced his way to fame. The peerage has given us one of the greatest of our poets, but never yet a painter.* There may be at this hour men as richly endowed by nature as Titian or Veronese, but who, finding art forbidden them as an ignoble pursuit, devote their lives to horse-racing, or some other employment which they perceive to be respectable. The absence of these men from our ranks operates against the social position of art with telling effect. When you meet an artist, you may presume almost with certainty that he was born in one of those classes which society thinks itself authorized to treat with disdain or condescension ; but when you meet a clergyman or an officer, you make no such inference. I am happy, however, to perceive symptoms of a change for the better in this respect. I know a young artist—a professional artist, I mean—who lives by his labour, and is yet the son of a country gentleman, and

* The Italian Marquis d'Azeglio, has achieved artistic reputation. His endowments however are so various that his own multiplied reputations stand in each other's way, for, just as the author of "Waverley" throws his shadow on the sweet poet of "Marmion," so d'Azeglio the landscape-painter has been first overshadowed by d'Azeglio the novelist, and, still later, by d'Azeglio the statesman. I believe we have no English marquis amongst *our* famous landscape-painters.

nearly related to some of the very greatest families in the peerage ; and I have heard of another who is the son of a great Yorkshire earl. If these young men, and a few more of the same rank, acquire general reputation as painters, much of the contempt attaching to the profession will be mitigated, because the public will no longer presume, when it hears of an artist, that he belongs of necessity to the lowest classes of the community.

It is much to be regretted that our art does not necessarily give external polish, and that it does not require, for success in it, what the world looks upon as education. A painter may learn to spell if he likes, but spelling will not be of the least use to him as a painter. And I am very sorry to have to observe that comparatively few artists *can* spell. The singular difficulty artists experience in this department of knowledge is one of the most curious things in the whole philosophy of education. I honestly believe that many painters find far less difficulty in painting noble works of art than in putting together the few words by which they are described in the Exhibition Catalogue. I alluded to this subject in the preceding chapter, but recall attention to it here as a hindrance to the worldly success of artists. The world, you see, has got an odd prejudice into its head that each word must be composed of a certain quantity of letters and no more, put in a certain order and no otherwise, and this arbitrary rule the world enforces with much severity. Now the artist class rebels against this tyranny. Either it cannot spell, or it will not, and I repeat it, this non-observance of regulations which society is determined to enforce is detrimental to success with society.

Again, artists wore beards at a time when a single hair on the chin was open rebellion against all the authority of custom. Turner shaved, it is true, but I attribute this to his origin ; being the son of a barber he thought it right, no doubt, to keep up a custom which provided his earliest days with bread. Perhaps, also, he may have taken a certain professional pride in a neatly shaven chin, having himself shaved the chins of others in his youth. But not all artists have had this advantage, and many of them persisted in wearing prodigious beards when society abhorred those ornaments. So here was another matter of offence.

And no trifling matter. No one knows the power of a custom till he has infringed it. Friends are preserved by conformity to "trifling" customs, who would be alienated for ever by a breach of them. To barristers and soldiers, shaving is an important professional duty ; shave they *must*, or cease to pursue their professions. A French advocate presenting himself at the bar with a moustache was not allowed to plead until he had shaved it off ; and certain London bankers offered this alternative to their clerks—THE RAZOR, or, DISMISSAL.

I may, therefore, allowably attribute much importance to the fact that it was the artistic class which first, in the nineteenth century, headed the great insurrection against the razor. The whole body has got into bad odour for this piece of insubordination.

Being myself guilty in this respect I take this opportunity of saying a word in behalf of my hirsute brethren.

The only valid objection against the beard is, that it

has not been in fashion for a century or two. But Custom never honestly says, "I am Custom, and what I will, I will"—she tells us continually that she is Reason herself, and that, consequently, whoever does not obey her is an idiot. And so she gives all sorts of reasons, such as they are, why men are to have smooth chins like women. Among these reasons I remember one or two, which I will answer.

1. *Because the beard is dirty.*

The beard, so far from being dirty, is the cleanest hair on a human being, for it must be washed thoroughly every time the face is washed. Ladies have no right to accuse bearded men of having dirty chins, unless their own tresses are washed with soap and water three or four times a day.

2. *That people ought to shave their beards because they cut the hair of their heads.*

Let the chin and the head be treated exactly in the same manner—this is precisely what we want. Let the advocates of shaving carry it consistently all over their heads, ladies and all, till they are like phrenological busts, and let us, who have a dislike to the razor, have our beards trimmed by the hairdresser, with his gentle comb and scissors, whenever he performs that office for the hair on our heads. Suppose we were to use as bad logic as our adversaries, and require them to shave their heads because they trim their whiskers.

3. *That people ought to shave their beards because they cut their nails.*

By the same rule they ought to shave their heads and eye-brows, but they don't.

4. *Because the beard interferes with eating, and makes people disgusting when engaged in that occupation.*

This objection is valid to a certain extent against the moustache, but not against the beard, which can never interfere at all. And the moustache it is not my duty to defend. It is sanctioned by the highest authority. Personages of the most exalted rank wear the moustache; nay more, they *cultivate* it with tender care, and if they are disgusting at feeding-time how does it happen that everybody is always so delighted to sit at their tables? But a napkin is all that is needed to keep the moustache in order during a repast. In houses, however, where they give you napkins for dinner only, and not for breakfast or lunch, a prudent man would clip his moustache with a pair of scissors so as to keep it out of his coffee. It is *not* necessary, as some falsely aver, to suck all liquids through a tube like a Brazilian tea-drinker.

5. *Because it is un-English.*

This is not true, the beard having been worn by many of the best and greatest Englishmen.

And if it *were* true that the beard is un-English, that is no reason why we should not wear it. Sir John Bowring, in reply to some people who objected to another innovation on the same grounds, gave a well deserved rebuke to their insular conceit. "It is a ridiculous outbreak of national vanity, of which an Englishman should be ashamed, for Englishmen should not talk more of English habits than I should talk of my own virtues or excellences, for we may be sure that there are many good habits which are *not* English, and all are not good

that *are* English. It was once very English to burn witches, and it is now somewhat English to beat wives, and of neither of those things have we cause to be proud."

6. *Because the beard is worn by Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and is therefore unorthodox.*

I am quite aware that shaving, in the first half of the nineteenth century, has formed a part of English religion. So have black hats. It is not long since no man could enter an English church without a shaven chin and a black hat.

It is odd, however, that the very people who hold shaving and black hats essential to salvation should buy so many religious prints wherein the apostles are always represented with fine well-grown beards, and *without* the black hat.

7. (A young lady's objection.) *That it must be very disagreeable to be kissed by a man with a beard, and that, therefore, such unfortunate men are not eligible as husbands.*

Dear young ladies, I allow the gravity of the objection. Happily, however, it is unfounded. The real obstacle to kissing is said, on good authority, to be *not* the beard, which does not come in the way at all, but the moustache. Now, the moustache is quite a different thing. It has long been an admired military decoration. Any young lady who is anxious to have information on this important subject may, therefore, easily procure it by referring the question to any of her friends who may happen to have married an officer in the army.

However, the "beard movement" has moved so irresistibly that we artists, who originated it, need no longer push it forward. It will go on fast enough with-

out our help. I expect to see the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor with reverend white beards before I die ; but if they wear that becoming natural ornament they will have to abandon the hideous artificial wig, that ugliest inheritance of the eighteenth century. The shaven chin and the barbarous wig go together very well, they are alike unnatural and unmanly ; but when old age wears its white honours again, let its own grey hairs suffice.

So there is every probability that the beard henceforth, as it becomes more generally adopted, will be no hindrance to "*The Painter in his Relation to Society.*" Yet I was bound to allude to it as one of the causes for the dislike with which painters have hitherto been regarded by conventional people.

Intimately connected with this love for the beard is the artist's passion for the picturesque in costume. Fops always hate the picturesque. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, once himself a dandy of a most unpicturesque epoch, makes one of his least admirable characters dress picturesquely, and takes the opportunity of remarking that "the coxcombry of the picturesque is the sign of a vainer mind than the commoner coxcombry of the mode." But an artist dresses, as he paints, picturesquely, not from vanity but from pure instinct ; not because he thinks he looks better so, but because he cannot help it. I can assure the reader that it requires much care and thought in the painter to dress unpicturesquely and hideously like other people, and that his most astounding costumes are those he has troubled himself about least. A fop will pay more attention to the bow of a narrow neck-tie

than a painter to the folds of his mantle. But the satirists, when they choose to pounce upon anything that society has already condemned, find an easy prey. So they dwell upon the picturesque of artist-costume, and deride it with much wit and ability. However, as our public satirist, *Punch*, is just as hard on a bishop, the incarnation of respectability, as he is on a painter, the least respectable of mortals, it's all fair, and we won't complain.

But let the mode itself become picturesque, and the painters will desist from rebellion, and give in a loyal adhesion to the new order of things. Velasquez has left us a picture of a numerous group of artists, in which I perceive no costume which was unfashionable in his time. In those days artists might dress like gentlemen, because the gentlemen themselves dressed artistically, but it is not so now. Still less was it so a generation since. The most amusing passages in M. Delécluze's book on the school of David, relate to some enthusiastic young members of it, who carried "classicism" to a practical issue by dressing themselves like the ancient Greeks, and marching about the streets of Paris in masquerade costumes borrowed from Homer. This is ludicrous enough, but these practical demonstrations had a serious meaning under their apparent absurdity. There is a visible tendency in all artists, except fashionable portrait-painters, to protest against the frightful uniform which society and the tailors condemn us all to wear.

The facility of admission into the artistic fraternity is certainly an evil in a social point of view. There was a

report some time ago that Sir Charles Eastlake wished to alter the constitution of the Academy so far as to make it an art-university, conferring degrees. The question immediately occurred how far the degree thus awarded would tend to fix and define the position of artists in society. I think certainly it might be of use, but I do not hope very much from it, because there are degrees awarded by other learned bodies to learning and skill in other professions, which, notwithstanding their powerful intrinsic claims, remain, like our own, in an inferior social position on account of political weakness.

The want of cohesion in the artistic class is also an evil, and a greater one than the facility of admission into it. For this facility does not extend very far. You may call yourself an artist if you choose, and so, certainly, reflect discredit on others, who are really artists if you are not, but you can never be a *famous* artist in these days without having done something to earn fame. Whereas the want of cohesion is universal in the art, good painters showing no more capacity for organization than bad ones. I know there is the Royal Academy, but that is a limited corporation, not a comprehensive organization. And since the time of Raphael the world of art has been torn by jealousy and dissension, and divided into little factions, bitterly hostile. The political lesson on which Italy has reconstituted itself, the arts have yet to learn. What chance is there that they will ever learn it?

There is some possibility of future organization. Artists are forced to incorporate themselves by the

necessity of public exhibitions, and they will soon discover that it would be a great convenience if they could also associate for purposes of study. There ought to be a college of landscape in every picturesque country, provided with ample means and appliances for the convenient study of nature. An establishment maintained by subscription like a London club, and provided with portable tent-studios and every means of locomotion, would be a great convenience to painters, and genuine amateurs who follow art seriously might find it their interest to join it. In the course of these volumes I have said enough of the physical difficulties of landscape-painting, and of the use of capital in art, to prove that a certain wise outlay may be a great help to a painter. Now this outlay, which falls very heavily on individuals, might be borne lightly by an association. Again, persons interested in the progress of the arts would readily bequeath their galleries to such colleges, and every member ought to be required to contribute one drawing at least, from nature, annually, to the collection of the institution. And why should not such colleges be, in course of time, enriched by the territorial or pecuniary gifts or bequests of lovers of art, just as the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge have been enriched by lovers of learning? I should like to see one college of this sort in the English, and another in the Scottish, lake-districts; there would, of course, be one in Wales, and there ought to be one in Switzerland. These colleges ought to be so far endowed as to enable them to afford the greatest facilities to the student at considerably less than ordinary hotel-charges. It may seem a painter's

Utopia, but I see no reason why something of this sort should not be realized, if ever the study of nature should rank as high as the study of Greek in the popular estimation. I would have all these colleges, though scattered throughout Europe, governed by one code of laws, and bound together as a university, giving degrees. Sir Charles Eastlake's idea of an Academy-university is more applicable to the case of figure-painters, but these landscape-colleges ought also to be incorporated with the Academy in one university, of which the President of the Academy would be chancellor. There ought to be one great gallery in London, capable of containing all the good pictures of the year, where they might be seen, and so one great cause of division would be removed. This is merely a hint for a possible organization. I know very well that all schemes of this sort are crude at first, until several minds have contributed to reduce the idea to a practicable shape.

Society does not like nor encourage individual enterprise, only associative. Its pet profession, the army, is an organized association in which the individual is lost, every trifle being regulated for him, down to the fashion of his hair* and the price of his dinner. In the Church, especially the Roman branch of it, the individual fares

* Here is a memorandum issued at Aldershott by Lieut.-General Pennefather, in the month of October, 1860.

“Mem. The Lieutenant-General wishes that general officers commanding brigades at their half-yearly inspection will direct particular attention to the length of the whiskers of the officers and men. The Lieutenant-General has observed that some officers of the division have whiskers of a most unusual size and length.”

One would infer from the portentous length of their whiskers that these officers were men, and not boys, but is this treating them like men?

no better, and not only the cut of his coat, which is of no consequence, but the model of his opinions, which is of very great consequence, is prescribed and dictated. But in literature and art the *man* is all in all. Luckily for him, he escapes in youth, by his very obscurity, from many hostile influences. He is always new, and since reverence for the past and contempt for the present are just as strong in art as in politics or law, the young genius is usually unfashionable for a long season. This is a Divine law, and by no means an overlooking of the artistic class, but a plan for its protection, giving it a freedom so perfect, that the beloved of the world are as dogs chained to their kennels in comparison. Of this freedom, a possession incomparably more valuable than rank, I think and speak with gratitude.

We cannot have the external force of organized bodies without their internal restrictions. And it would demand the most profound wisdom to organize such persons as artists, so as neither to impose a single needless restriction, nor omit a necessary one. A soldier or priest, if asked to organize us, would hedge us round with a hundred observances in no way conducive to the objects of our association, and obstacles to individual advancement. Better our present inorganic confusion than such a soulless order! We are like the sands of the sea—bad material to make ropes of, yet rich with inestimable treasure. You may search amongst it if you will, and find the scattered gems. But who shall build all these loose stones together into strength, and still not hide a single precious one?

It is a necessity and not a defect of great organizations,

that the caprice of the individual should be restrained by an overpowering conventionalism. Organization always infers discipline. And discipline rules even the most trivial minutiae. Being the opposite of individualism, it hisses and boils with rage when it detects the presence of the hostile element, as an alkaline solution effervesces when an acid one is poured into it. Even in such trifles as the dressing of the hair, discipline descends to the minutest details all the world over, for it is its nature to extirpate the individualism even of wayward locks. The nobility of discipline is that it sacrifices the single will to the common aim, and, repressing private diversities, replaces them by public union.

Now the arts repose naturally on individualism. What is most precious in every work of art is the human spirit that produced it. Individual diversities cannot here be suppressed ; on the contrary, they must be guarded with jealous care. And there is a certain art-power, especially in landscape, which can only be reached in loneliness and isolation.

Again, every powerful organization requires a hierarchy. But since artistic greatness is a gift of nature, and *not* an external distinction, which a king can give, it follows that there might easily be a damaging discrepancy between the hierarchic rank of the artist and his artistic rank. Indeed, this discrepancy already exists. Callcott was knighted and not Turner ; but no sovereign could make Callcott greater than Turner.

This individualism of art is its greatest social drawback, because it deprives artists of a certain ground of sympathy with a disciplined society. Military life,

being organized and disciplined, trains men for society, which has also an organization and a discipline, whereas, art develops those qualities most which society likes least—qualities, indeed, which have a decided tendency to unfit men for society.

Again, this individualism is, socially, weakness. So long as the world endures, the men who can band themselves together, will be stronger and more respected than those who cannot cohere. Priests laugh at independent thinkers, and call them a rope of sand; the Cardinals will ever bully a lonely Galileo. Every ensign is protected by the proud will of a hundred legions. The inventor is utterly unsupported, till he has made himself famous, and gathered round him a private bodyguard of determined defenders. It is by association that classes of men compel respect, but alas for the original man who can find no associates!

And this, though generally true of all branches of our art, is pre-eminently so of landscape. There have been great schools of the figure, such as those of Raphael and Rubens, where a train of pupils and imitators followed the great master as courtiers follow a Prince, but the chief of landscape-painters was the loneliest of men. Landscape-painting has hitherto been the most unsocial of all professions. I know of no employment to be compared to it, in this respect, but that of watching in a lighthouse. Yet even these watchers are appointed by *threes* to trim the lamps in those stormy towers; but the painter watches the waves alone. For his art is singularly isolating by the very conditions of success in it. It loves desert places; its

Is it not inevitable that all who comprehend art should honour the mighty artist? For all men respect *power*, and all men respect artistic power who can recognise its operation. Some workpeople were sent to the Exhibition of Art Treasures at Manchester, and came away complaining that there was "nought to see." These, and others at the same intellectual level, cannot be expected to have any veneration for a kind of power whose manifestations they are not qualified to apprehend. But not thus does one report of the might of the artist-creators, who has really beheld their creations with eyes from which the scales of ignorance have fallen.

"In Turner, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese, the intense-ness of perception, first, as to what is to be done, and then of the means of doing it, is so colossal, that I always feel in the presence of their pictures just as other people would in that of a supernatural being. Common talkers use the word 'magic' of a great painter's power, without knowing what they mean by it. They mean a great truth. That power *is* magical; so magical, that, well understood, no enchanter's work could be more miraculous or more *appalling*; and though I am not often kept from saying things by timidity, I should be afraid of offending the reader if I were to define to him accurately the kind and degree of awe with which I have stood before Tintoret's 'Adoration of the Magi,' at Venice, and Veronese's 'Marriage in Cana,' in the Louvre."

And, mark you, in all good fiction, those persons who are represented as holding painters in contempt, are also of necessity represented as being at the same

time ignorant of art. Thus Thackeray says of Honeyman, "But Honeyman knew no more of the subject, than a deaf and dumb man knows of music. He could talk the art-cant very glibly, and had a set of Morghens and Madonnas as became a clergyman and a man of taste; but he saw not with eyes such as those where-with Heaven had endowed the humble little butler's boy, to whom splendours of Nature were revealed, to vulgar sights invisible, and beauties manifest in forms, colours, shadows of common objects, where most of the world saw only what was dull, and gross, and familiar."

It is necessary to have read "The Newcomes" attentively to have a definite idea of Colonel Newcome's views as to art and artists. He is very civil and courteous to Gandish and Smee, and lets his son be an artist without opposition. Still, Colonel Newcome would not have been exactly the "gentleman" he is intended to be, had he seriously ranked art along with other manly pursuits. He belongs to the large class, who, without despising artists as necessarily base or ignoble, treat them kindly, and consider them very good people, but frivolous, and occupied, not in a very mean pursuit, but in a trifling one. It is obvious that, with such views, Colonel Newcome would be kind, in a somewhat condescending way, to our friends Gandish and Smee, and would even allow his son full liberty to pursue his art, *as an amusement*, which was the light in which the colonel always regarded it. But when the colonel's great banking speculation is at its height, and Clive still tries to pursue his art, the colonel cannot see without bitterness that this boyish pastime of painting interferes with

the serious duties of Clive's position as the son of a speculator. It is a vexation to the colonel when Clive goes to his painting-room, puts on his old velvet jacket, and works with his palette and brushes. "Palettes and brushes! Could he not give up those toys when he was called to a much higher station in the world?"

This gentlemanly degree of contempt for art and its professors, which, however, is by no means excessive, not being either haughty or insolent, or even unkind, is yet thus severely accounted for by the satirist:—

"The world enters into the artist's studio, and *scornfully* bids him a price for his genius, or *makes dull pretence to admire it*. What know you of his art? *You cannot read the alphabet of that sacred book, good old Thomas Newcome!* What can you tell of its glories, joys, secrets, consolations?"

The reader will observe in the words I have italicised a strong confirmation of my argument that *scorn* of the artist is never accompanied by real admiration for his art, only by a *dull pretence* at admiration. Thackeray cannot help reiterating this great truth; and in this passage it is stated in as direct a manner as a novelist usually employs.

I have quoted a striking paragraph from "Modern Painters," in which Mr. Ruskin expresses some of the feelings with which *he* looks on the great masterpieces. This is the way Colonel Newcome looked at them.

"But what was all this rapture about a snuffy brown picture called Titian, this delight in three flabby nymphs by Rubens, and so forth? As for the vaunted antique, and the Elgin marbles—it might be that that battered

torso was a miracle, and that broken-nosed bust a perfect beauty. He tried and tried to see that they were. He went away privily, and worked at the National Gallery with a catalogue; and passed hours in the Museum before the ancient statues, desperately praying to comprehend them, and puzzled before them, as he remembered he was puzzled before the Greek rudiments as a child, when he cried over *ὁ καὶ ἡ ἀληθὴς, καὶ τὸ ἀληθές.*"

And so Colonel Newcome's contempt for the pursuit of art is quite satisfactorily accounted for.

In like manner Balzac makes Rouget ignorant of the value of his own pictures, and indicates how little Philippe Bridau knew of the matter, by making him steal a *copy*, mistaking it for the original. But it is Agatha, the mother, whose ignorance is most dwelt upon, even in the last touching scenes, justly, and with profound artistic truth; for her contempt for art is one of her most strongly marked characteristics throughout the book. So, on her very death-bed, when she repents of her conduct to Joseph, he says to her, "*Est-ce que tu n'es pas la douce et l'indulgente compagne de ma vie misérable? Tu ne comprends pas la peinture? Eh! mais ça ne se donne pas.*" And later, one evening, looking at a picture, she exclaims aloud, "*Oh, comme je voudrais savoir ce que c'est que la couleur!*"

Nor have the novelists failed to enforce the other half of the argument. Just as the ignorant people always despise artists, so the better informed ones respect them. Colonel Newcome and Honeyman may despise poor J. J., but Clive Newcome does not; for Thackeray, having represented him as naturally alive to art, and as also

possessing some acquired knowledge of the subject, could never have made him despise a true artist like J. J., notwithstanding his humble birth. Clive writes in a letter, "Our friend J. J., very different to myself in so many respects, *so superior in all*," &c.; and afterwards, speaking to Pendennis of his father and his wife, he says, "But they neither understand me, don't you see? The Colonel can't help thinking I am a degraded being, because I am fond of painting. Still, dear old boy, he patronises Ridley; a man of genius, whom those sentries ought to salute, by Jove, sir, when he passes. Ridley patronised by an old officer of Indian dragoons, a little bit of a Rosey, and a fellow who is not fit to lay his palette for him! I want sometimes to ask J. J.'s pardon after the Colonel has been talking to him in his confounded condescending way, uttering some awful bosh about the fine arts. Rosey follows him, and trips round J. J.'s studio, and pretends to admire, and says, 'How soft, how sweet;' recalling some of mamma-in-law's dreadful expressions, which make me shudder when I hear them."

And if we turn to real persons, with what veneration does a certain Oxford graduate speak of the barber's son? If Mr. Ruskin had not understood art, would he have respected Turner as he did? In all probability not. Learned, he would have despised Turner as illiterate; refined, he would have disliked his rough manners; religious, he could never have borne with his unbelief. Ruskin's veneration for Turner results entirely from his knowledge of art.

And so we come back to our theory of respect. It is power, power, always POWER that commands the respect

of men ; for power is always respected when it is recognised. When people, guilty of no evident crime, do not happen to be respected, it may mean, either that they have no power, or that their power is as yet unrecognised. And the power of artists is of so subtle a nature, that very few indeed can ever detect its presence, far less be appalled and awe-stricken by its manifestations.

The power of money is most respected by the ignorant, because they feel it the most directly. They also respect all authority which inflicts physical punishment, because, though their minds be uninstructed, their nerves are yet sensible of pain. So the common people respect the judge, because he can hang them (on due occasion), and they used to respect the priest, when he could torture them.

And if painters could establish a Holy Inquisition to burn or crucify all heretics who did not buy their works, the profession of painting would become at once respectable. The cellar now used for the exhibition of sculpture at the Royal Academy would make a torture chamber of appropriate gloom and horror, and the ingenious mechanics of our age could no doubt devise instruments of torture not inferior to the master-pieces of old. O blissful dream ! O happy millennium of the arts, when that unhappy Dives who shall refuse to purchase a picture at the Exhibition, shall be immediately marched down under a guard of beadles, through those dark halls where ancient statues frown in dusty grandeur, on to that inner chamber where the grim torturers shall await him ! There let him be stretched

on the tearing rack ! pinch his flesh with red-hot pincers ! put his thumbs in thumbscrews, and squeeze them well ! And if any round citizen still remained heretical, and still refused to pay tribute to art, I would have him suffer *la peine forte et dure*—he should be pressed flat in a great hydraulic press. O happy time ! O glorious epoch ! when the unappreciative members of the public shall have this choice offered to them—namely, either to buy pictures and reverence painters, or be burned at the stake in Trafalgar Square, without one drop of water to slake their thirst, though the funny little fountains trickle audibly all the time ! If painters could do this, there would be no question about their respectability. Every child would be taught to respect them from its earliest years. And the Academicians would enjoy exalted rank in the state, with all sorts of honours and emoluments. But as this desirable state of things seems improbable (though there is no telling where an improving culture may carry us), I am afraid the golden epoch, when the painter shall be respected by society at large, is somewhat visionary also. However, nobody is forced to be a painter. The Academy does not obtain its recruits by the conscription. Youths are not torn from the paternal roof to be drilled in the Life Academy ; nor are young landscape-painters ordered off to the Highlands like Russian conscripts to the Caucasus.

If I were asked to define what position is most desirable for art, I should at once answer, “ One similar to that of literature.”

It does not degrade a man, socially, to have written a book. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, a perfect “ gentleman,”

in the society-sense of the term, can yet retain that character, and accept money from Messrs. Routledge. Both socially and politically ambitious, he has not found the professional pursuit of letters an obstacle to his advancement in the world. Disraeli earned money as a novelist before he became a cabinet minister. Macaulay took large sums from the Longmans—fame speaks of a twenty-thousand pound cheque—and yet Macaulay, so far from losing caste by his literary successes, was promoted to the highest caste on account of them. Walter Scott took money for “Marmion,” and instead of being degraded thereby, was afterwards made a baronet. Even my Lord Byron, who sneered at Scott for working for half-a-crown a line, himself took a guinea a line with complacency.

So that I may earn money with this pen, if any publisher is to be found discriminating enough to pay me, and yet not lose caste. But I may not work for money with my brush without sinking ever so far in the abysmal depths of social degradation. This seems unreasonable, because I know very well that I am quite as intellectually, and certainly as innocently, employed with the other instrument as with this. And it is most desirable that a gentleman who prefers the brush should be allowed to use it—most desirable, but not to be hoped for.

As I have shown already, the superior position of literature is entirely due to its social and political power. And there is no branch of art which can ever exercise power of this sort, except caricature.

So the artist likely to be treated with the greatest deference in society, is the caricaturist: for the fear of

ridicule is universal. The caricaturist, happy artist ! is the only variety of that genus which nature has provided with a sting. All the rest are innocuous—landscape-painters the most innocuous of all, and consequently the least respected. Tennyson says—

“ He is but a landscape-painter,”

choosing the humblest kind of artist he knew of that he might wed the village-girl on terms of equality.

But even our friend Péponet could respect a caricaturist. Edgard, whom the reader will remember as Octave's friend, is collecting materials for a book of caricatures, to be entitled “*Les Faux Bonshommes*.” Péponet gets to know of this, and fearing to be included, is wonderfully polite to Edgard, till he has convinced himself that he is not to be in the fatal book—and even then wise reflections pass through his mind, and he determines on asking the artist to dinner.

PÉPONET.

Mais, voyons, tout cela ne m'empêche pas de vous garder
(A part.) Il ne m'y a pas mis, mais il pourrait m'y mettre . . .
(Haut.) Vous dînez avec nous ?

I ought not to close this paper without stating, however briefly, the good effects of this social contempt for the artist, in keeping him out of society. Sir Walter Scott, I know, held an opposite opinion. He says that, with a view to avoid literary irritability, “it was his first resolution to keep as far as was in his power abreast of society, continuing to maintain his place in general company, without yielding to the very natural temptation of narrowing himself to what is called literary

society." "By doing so," he continues, "I imagined I should escape the besetting sin of listening to language which, from one motive or another, is apt to ascribe a very undue degree of consequence to literary pursuits, as if they were indeed the business, rather than the amusement of life."

In the last line is the key to Sir Walter's views. An artist in practice, he was a dilettant in feeling ; by instinct artist, dilettant by education. His literary work was not a serious business to him, but an "amusement." I suppose the sheriff's work was serious, not the novelist's. Of the two characters, sheriff or novelist, in which has Sir Walter exercised the greater influence ? Perhaps it might have been worth doing in earnest, after all, this novel-writing, being likely to endure for some few centuries at least, and to influence for good or evil several generations of his countrymen.

And this very passage, which seems quite contrary to my argument, is in reality a strong foundation for it. Scott reasons thus :—

We cannot help taking the tone of the society we frequent.

In a society where literature is looked upon as something serious, I should very likely come to think of it seriously.

But I do not want to think of it seriously ; so I will avoid this kind of society.

In general society, on the other hand, literature is looked upon as an amusement.

This is just the way I wish to follow it.

So I will stick to general society.

The argument is quite sound, and very instructive. Suppose, however, a painter who, having a different object, were to come to another conclusion by an identical process of reasoning :—

We cannot help taking the tone of the society we frequent.

In general society art is looked upon as an amusement.

This is just the way I do *not* wish to follow it.

So I will eschew general society.

The effect of this kind of society on the artist has been clearly stated by Mr. Ruskin :—

“ He should be fit for the best society, *and should keep out of it.*” * The italics are Mr. Ruskin’s own, and are full of meaning.

Then, in a note, he adds—

“ Society always has a destructive influence upon an artist : first, by its sympathy with his meanest powers ; secondly, by its chilling want of understanding of his greatest ; and thirdly, by its vain occupation of his time and thoughts. Of course, a painter of men must be *among* men ; but it ought to be as a watcher, not as a companion.”

So that, perhaps, on the whole, it may be as well that society should not be too agreeable to the artist, of which there would be danger if his place in it were sounder.

But I think it a great misfortune for “society” itself that the classes composing it should look with favour on so few occupations.

* Stones of Venice, vol. iii. page 40.

In the highest class, these are limited practically to two.*

When you wish to ascertain the social standing of occupations in any country, ascertain first which are compatible with the highest caste.

Do young noblemen go into the army and navy? Yes, very generally; even princes of the blood. Do they go into the Church? Occasionally. Do they read for the bar? No. Do they article themselves to attorneys? Never. Do they study medicine? No. What other recognised profession do they follow? Not one. The highest caste in England can only fight or preach, it appears. The middle-age theory, that every gentleman who had any profession at all must be either soldier or priest, still survives.

But, considering the immense variety of human endowment, it seems possible that there may be gentlemen in our highest class capable of doing something else than fighting and preaching. To fight well and to preach well are both, no doubt, very good things; but the choice is rather limited when there are only two things to choose from. And persons of rank very often do their children great wrong, besides rendering anything but a service to their two favourite professions, when they condemn young men of talent and energy, who might have distinguished themselves in other careers, to remain nonentities in these. I see here the awful operation of an irresistible natural law. In our

* I except the business of governing because it is not a trade to live by. A member of the British Parliament is not only unpaid, but has generally to pay for his work.

exclusiveness, it is always ourselves whom we exclude. And in your narrow scorn of all human labour which does not either clothe itself with scarlet coat or white surplice, you have driven half your children into the hell of a forced idleness, and condemned them to seek, in the maddening excitements of debauchery, that stimulus which they might else have found in the noblest achievements of the intellect.

And the utility of such inquiries as this is, that they unsettle the existing classification by showing its insufficiency. The reader may be assured that I should not have led him through such a mass of unpleasant evidence for my own amusement. Do you think it can be particularly agreeable to a man to hear his own calling continually sneered at? I open this question with no mere personal or even professional views. I want to unsettle all orders of men in the reader's imagination, and to induce him to examine their several claims to his reverence or consideration. For I know that power is never so powerful as when it passes for something else than power, and that the best way to prevent it from degenerating into tyranny is to state fairly its just claims to respect. Might always calls herself right; and, since nobody dare contradict her, the world acquiesces. And when might claims all honour, who shall gainsay her? Worship the strong, if you will; but, at least, worship them on good grounds—for their strength, namely. Scorn the weak, if you are mean enough; but avow honestly that it is for their weakness that you scorn them. So, at least, the two questions of the inherent nobleness of an occupation, and its convenience as an instrument of

government, shall have some chance of getting disentangled in the minds of men. And thus the advancing intelligence of the community may one day begin to consider another social question, of some importance, whether it is better to do things noble in themselves, and have little power over our fellows, or to do base and ignoble things that we may rule over millions.

And if the reader would object that I have put matters in too unfavourable a light, and that the world is less interested and slavish than I have described it, let me answer with Rodolphe :—

Eh, mon Dieu ! non ; je vois le monde tel qu'il est.
A quoi sert de parler comme une pastorale,
Et quel profit croit-on qu'en tire la morale ?
Ces fades lieux communs, dont nous sommes nourris,
Ne sont pas pour tremper de vigoureux esprits.
Quand un livre niais, bourré de phrases vides,
Aura fait un faux monde aux jeunes gens candides,
Quand ils supposeront, sur la foi des régents,
Qu'on n'honore ici-bas que les honnêtes gens ;
Que résultera-t-il de toutes ces chimères ?
Que les réalités leur seront plus amères.

CHAPTER III.

PICTURE BUYING, WISE AND FOOLISH.

A TRUTH bitter to all men who live by the exercise of their talents is the supremacy of money over talent, and the power of mere gold to enslave the finest and most delicate intelligences. It is useless to endeavour to evade or deny this fact, and it always seems to me that the position of talent in the world would be sounder if its real relation to capital were thoroughly and universally understood. Why not admit frankly, if the fact is indeed so, that the purse is the master and the brain the slave? Our philosophy ought to be able to face any fact, however unpleasant.

The simple truth is, that capital is the nurse and governess of the arts; not always a very wise or judicious nurse, but an exceedingly powerful one. And in the relation of money to art, the man who has money will rule the man who has art, unless the artist has money enough to enable him to resist the money of the buyer. For money alone is powerful enough to resist money, and starving men are weak.

But for capital to support the fine arts, it must be abundant—there must be superfluity. The senses will first be gratified to the full before the wants of the intellect awaken. Plenty of good meat and drink is the

first desire of the young capitalist ; then he must satisfy the ardours of the chase. One or two generations will be happy with these primitive enjoyments of eating and slaying, but a day will come when the descendant and heir of these will awake into life with larger wants. He will take to reading in a book, he will covet the possession of a picture ; and unless there are plenty of such men as he in a country, there is but a poor chance there for the fine arts.

To follow this ascending order of culture somewhat more in detail, I may say that the first sign of it is an increasing refinement of physical taste. When a man has come to perceive that the highest quality of a liquor is not its intoxicating power, but its flavour, when he begins to prefer wine to gin, and really would rather drink half a dozen glasses of old port, and remain sober, than half a dozen glasses of strong gin, with all the advantages of getting drunk, that man has made a great step towards an æsthetic and intellectual life.

In eating, a parallel progress consists in the preference of delicate flavour to mere stimulus. The ordinary English notion of good cookery, as we find it in places of public entertainment, is simply plenty of pepper. The French are confessedly our superiors in this art, and their acknowledged supremacy consists mainly in their perception of delicate gradations of flavour, to which the ordinary British palate, from the constant use of fiery stimulants, is, of course, absolutely insensible. But when, as occasionally in our higher classes, the palate becomes as much alive to the variations of flavour as the ear of a musician to the variety of sounds, there is a progress in

the education of one sense which often precedes a similar advance in other and higher senses. Coarse people will say that we are getting more sensual as we become more sensitive, and contrast our delicate tastes with the simpler ones of our forefathers. But we are not in reality more sensual ; we are less sensual than they were. To prefer a well-ordered dinner—in which flavours harmonise with and yet relieve each other, like the notes of a beautiful melody, or the tints of a fine picture—to a gluttonous feed on peppery flesh, is an advance of the same kind as the higher senses make when we learn to prefer the gradations of first-rate violin-playing to the clatter of a brass band, or a water-colour by Turner to a big picture by Benjamin West. And although luxury has its own great dangers, I believe it to be better for a state that its inhabitants should innocently enjoy the faintest flavours of thyme and laurel, and know the scent of a hundred vintages, than that they should besot themselves with bad tobacco and poisoned beer.

We may note also, as a sign of progress, the decreasing appetite for cruelty in sport. Cruelty is a childish but not a manly instinct, and it becomes gradually weaker as we approach maturity. So in the history of the race, we perceive a steady diminution in the love of torturing animals, as the race slowly emerges from its period of infancy. Still, the animal passion for the destruction of life exists in most of us very strongly at the present day, and with the exception of one or two persons in advance of their times, who are set down by the public as enthusiasts, the most civilised nations in the world have not yet found out that it is possible to

secure enjoyment for ourselves without inflicting suffering on other creatures. Such persons as Mr. Ruskin, who openly expresses his repugnance to hunting and shooting, are however so very exceptional as yet, that the mass of gentlemen in England still consider those amusements the most important privileges of wealth. The reader need not fear any preaching from me on this subject. I should as soon think of preaching to my terriers and ferrets, because they like to kill rats, as to my friends and neighbours, because they like to kill grouse. It is an affair of pure instinct—an instinct deeply implanted in our primitive nature, and which resists even a high degree of intellectual culture with wonderful obstinacy. Nevertheless, the instinct is certainly weaker than it was. The weakening of these tendencies will be shown always in the *decreasing degree of cruelty* in the devices of the sportsman. A double-barrelled fowling-piece in skilful hands is so merciful a messenger of death that the grouse which it *kills* suffer infinitely less than if left to die of disease or hunger, or to be hawked at by wild falcons. The only subject connected with a day's shooting which it might be unpleasant to a humane sportsman to reflect upon, is the condition of the wounded birds; and as the proportion of killed and wounded is probably much the same in sport as in war, the aggregate of suffering on a grouse moor, after a hard day's shooting, must be something like that on a battle-field after a battle. Still, as this suffering is not witnessed by the sportsman, and neither desired nor enjoyed by him, grouse-shooting is a great advance on the baiting of

bears, bulls, and badgers, as practised by our ancestors, and on bull-fighting as practised still in Spain.

The first progress of an uneducated man, when he begins to accumulate wealth, is always to a higher *physical* refinement ; and I am so far from quarrelling with, or despising him for this, that I look upon it as a good and hopeful sign if he becomes rather fastidious, and learns a lordly contempt for bad wine and indifferent cigars. And I think a rich man at this stage, whilst the intellectual powers are as yet dormant, or manifesting their existence only in a feeble and unconscious way, is quite the highest and happiest example of animal life to be found on the planet. Men at this stage spend vast sums on the animal enjoyments of eating and drinking and slaying, whilst their intellectual appetite is satisfied at small cost. The purveyor, the wine merchant, respect them ; the bookseller and the artist desire their abundant gold in vain. It is not that the gold is always clutched with closed fingers, for it will flow freely enough in the channels of animal appetite ; but if you could see these men's private accounts for a year, you would find an astounding disproportion between the expenditure for the belly and the expenditure for the brain—hundreds of pounds for the wine-cellar, and a few miserable shillings for the book-shelf. Still, there is progress to be traced in the physical enjoyments before we come to the intellect at all, and I like to see a man getting difficult to please with his food and drink, because it is a sign that ere long he will awake to other wants.

All this seems to have very little to do with picture-

buying, but it is leading us to that subject. I have still a word or two to say on the gradual development of our desires, from the lower to the higher ones, before I come to the desire for good pictures.

Although a rude kind of drawing may have preceded writing in the universal history of mankind, it is certain that in our modern civilisation the critical enjoyment and appreciation of literature precede the intelligent interest in pictorial art.

The first introduction to literature is always made by religion. In this respect, all religions based on books which it is obligatory to study, aid culture. The dutiful reading of the Bible, and prayers, and sermons, is almost the only reading of vast numbers of the English. Persons at this stage of culture have little libraries almost invariably filled with theological literature of a low intellectual order, yet sufficiently difficult to train them for literature of a more elevated character, like the primers of children, which necessarily precede the more advanced class-books.

Having practised reading as a religious duty, and diligently spelt out many tracts and sermons, the student of literature passes for more entertainment to the exciting pages of the newspaper.

The influence of newspapers on popular education is enormous. I look upon a newspaper as a great school. The rich man subscribes to the *Times* and the *Saturday Review*, and so goes on to a day school of a high order, with an extra retrospective lesson for Saturday night. But the poor man can have his penny newspaper now: so he also goes to school. There is a progress, too,

observable in the reading of the same newspaper : first, people read the little paragraphs and scraps of news, principally murders, thefts, and fatal accidents ; but afterwards they advance to the graver articles on politics and trade, and, lastly, peruse dissertations on current literature, and notices of contemporary art. They thus become acquainted with an immense miscellany of facts which are of the greatest use in enlarging their conceptions of human society. They even learn something about art. The very direct bearing of the newspapers on the fine arts is easily proved. The *Illustrated London News*, by its portraits of living artists, and woodcuts of their works, has carried into thousands of homes, where such a fact would probably never otherwise have penetrated in our generation, the not universally known truth that there are certain men alive in England whose profession it is to paint pictures. In a chapter treating of the relation of capital to art, how can I omit an allusion to the services which the press has rendered, and constantly renders, to our art ? I dare not say that the tone of common art-criticism is as yet remarkable for its elevation, or that the ordinary notions about art which we find current amongst mere journalists are either very wise or very well expressed ; but it is already an immense gain to artists that the existence of their calling should be made generally known to the masses of the population. Such an event, for instance, as the Exhibition of Art Treasures at Manchester, if it had been possible in a country without newspapers, would have produced very little effect in such a country in comparison with the effect it produced in our newspaper-reading

England. I am aware that many grave objections have been urged against the manner in which the public press took up the subject of that exhibition, and I acknowledge willingly that our journalists talked too much like connoisseurs, and too little like men who feel the true scope and bearings of noble art; still, in spite of these shortcomings, which were very natural and excusable, they always scattered abroad *the great fact of the existence of art*, which as yet had scarcely penetrated our provincial towns and villages.

Newspaper reading leads to secular book reading, not merely because newspapers advertise books and make extracts from them, but because they awaken an interest in all sorts of subjects which they cannot themselves often fully satisfy. So the man who takes in a newspaper is very likely to end by buying a book not exclusively of a religious character. And the recent innovation of a cheap literature does a great deal to get people into the *habit* of buying books. I have known some persons who imagined that cheap literature was good mainly for the poor; but cheap literature is bought as much by rich people as by poor ones, and this for a very good reason—the difficulty, namely, with which even the richest of us lay out money for that which we do not really value. The outlay on books, as on many other things, is not so much in proportion to the means as the wants and desires of the purchaser, and the first outlay of this kind is always as small as possible, because the purchaser is in that state when he cannot be sure of the value of what he buys, and prudently risks as little as he can. But the man who thinks a shilling the natural price of a

book will give a sovereign for a dinner, and a hundred sovereigns for the pleasure of slaying a wild stag. So the earliest book-buying has an air of pettiness and meanness. A paper-backed shilling novel is the commonest purchase of this kind, or some classic, as, for instance, Milton's "Paradise Lost," which looks safer as an investment, and of which accordingly a very vile edition, in small print, is selected, to the detriment happily of nobody's eyes, as nobody will ever read it.

But now the first step is made. He who has bought one book will probably purchase another, and one day, many years hence, he may even come to covet a decent edition that one can read with comfort to the eyes, as well as refreshment to the intellect.

But before people will invest in fine editions they subscribe to libraries, such as Mr. Mudie's—excellent institutions in their way, but which ought not entirely to do away with private book-shelves. For it is impossible to pursue a study to any good result without plenty of books always at hand for reference.

In England a certain degree of literary culture usually precedes the first awakening of the desire for art. We have, indeed, innumerable instances of persons who have pushed their literary attainments to the highest point they could possibly reach, whilst the faculty which enjoys art remained for ever dead or dormant within them. Such men were Scott, and Byron, and Sydney Smith, all cultivated so far as books go, and two of them very fond of looking at nature, but all three utterly dead to art; and the reader will no doubt be able to recall to his memory many instances of less celebrated persons

highly cultivated in book-lore, for whom fine art has no attraction. Still, most people who care for an engraving or a picture have first cared for a book ; and as literary compositions are an earlier intellectual product of the human race than pictorial ones, so they are first enjoyed by individuals.

The desire for art being one of our higher appetites, and the desire for *noble* art the very highest of them all, it is of late development, and extremely feeble in its first manifestations ; according to the well-known law, that the successive development of human desires is also progressive—that is, from lower desires to higher.

The first desire for art appears to be always for portraiture, and generally portraiture of *self* and self's wife. Certainly, there is no subject in the world more interesting to a man than himself, unless it be his wife ; but these two subjects may not always be quite so delightful to all the acquaintances of the happy pair, especially considering that they can look at the originals, if their eyes desire that satisfaction. The love of portrait is a vulgar form of egotism so long as it is confined to the conjugal canvasses which are so frequently to be seen in this domestic country, hanging in stately gilt frames, over highly polished mahogany sideboards. But when this love of portrait extends itself to one's friends it becomes more respectable, and it speaks well for a man's capacity for friendship if he has a little gallery of those he loves best. "Little," I say, and advisedly ; for one narrow room would probably contain the images of all who care for us, yet how precious will those images be when Death shall have done his work ! And the portraits of those

whom we have not seen, yet who are our companions in thought, or our teachers by their example, may also be deservedly precious to us if procurable. A man would follow his profession none the worse in a cabinet surrounded with the likenesses of those who had most ennobled it. How could a painter, for instance, suffer himself to be unworthily discouraged by the difficulties of his art, if the faces of Reynolds and Velasquez were looking down upon him in their victorious calm?

The desire for family portraits is supplied in our day by photography, with one very happy result—the necessary diminution in scale. The offensiveness of the old conjugal daubs was not merely in the vileness of the execution, but the impertinent importance of the size. Why a worthy citizen should require thirty square feet of canvass for the exhibition of his elegant person on the walls of his dining-room, passes all understanding. Would not a more modest area suffice? Photography has settled this question* by the necessarily miniature sizes of photographic portraits. But where is the necessity for hanging these photographs about chimney-pieces, in little gilt frames? They are quite ineffective as room decoration, and valueless as art. Pray let them

* This is unhappily a mistake. Since writing the above passage, I have seen a dreadful announcement in the newspapers, that the Prince of Wales has had a photograph of himself taken *the size of life*! O lamentable example! O most pernicious precedent! Fancy the dining-rooms of our middle classes decorated with photographs of their owners as large as life, with every detail of lace and jewellery mercilessly inflicted upon our wearied eyes! Let princes be taken of the actual size, or even magnified seven times if it suits them, but let humble subjects modestly content themselves with card miniatures in an album.

be printed always on paper from collodion negatives, and then kept in a well-bound album.

The first sign of a love of art great enough to go beyond portraits, is the purchase of engravings. The subjects of these engravings, when the purchasers select for themselves, indicate their tastes in the clearest manner. There are religious prints, and sporting prints, and licentious prints ; prints theatrical, prints military, prints ecclesiastical. Engravings sell enormously in England, and are provided for all classes and all tastes. But these engravings are not so much bought from a love of art as from a feeling of interest in the subjects they illustrate. Thus, when I go into a house where there is a pretty engraving of surpliced choristers, with an inscription in red letters underneath—probably a scrap of Latin—I know that the master of the house, or its mistress, is a Puseyite ; but when I behold John Knox thundering from his pulpit, I suspect that the head of the family has a leaning to the Low Church. But I do not infer that either cares for art. And if you penetrate to the private chambers of young bachelors, like Mr. Harry Foker, you will find prints of a more objectionable character, indicating a taste for fine female ankles and well-developed busts. Yet in all this there is no interest in art.

Still, even when some care for art *does* really awaken, engravings are always better appreciated than pictures. This for many reasons. The child likes bright *colours*, and the perfectly cultivated man likes good *colouring* ; but to the man whose culture is just beginning, colour is a great trouble and embarrassment : he does not really enjoy it, and is very glad to be rid of it, always preferring,

in his private soul, an engraving from a picture, to the picture itself. Thus, Turner's works are popular in the engravings, and have been widely disseminated by engravers; but the originals are *not* popular, nor ever can be. And, independently of the question of colour, the mechanical workmanship of a skilful engraver always appears more wonderful to ignorant observers than the handling of the greatest painters, because the intentional roughness of loaded colour, or any powerful impasto, looks like daubing and bad execution to them; whereas, in a print this is not possible, and the skilled cutting of the lines has a delicacy of a kind more obvious to ordinary people than the most delicate application of a colour-film. I believe the great Duke of Wellington was in this stage all his life; so that any reader who happens to be there too, may console himself with the reflection that he is in very good company.

But let no one flatter himself that his preference of engravings to pictures is the result of a refined appreciation of *form*, because, however exquisite in their execution, engravings from first-rate pictures are generally very far inferior to the originals, even if judged with reference to form only. All good engravers know the infinite difficulty of perfect copyism in their art; and the thorough mastery of the burin is so rare, that the majority of our popular prints are not to be relied upon for form at all. The designs on wood furnished to our wood-engravers are habitually cut to pieces by all but the very best men, and even these are only to be trusted when they do every stroke with their own hands, and do not employ unskilful assistants.

Barbarous Orientals enjoy good colour, and can produce it in their arts. But erudition and the conceit it fosters seem deadly to this instinct, for hitherto the most erudite epochs have coloured the most vilely. Latin and Greek, and classical architecture, and academic rules killed colour in France ; but Décamps, and Troyon, and Breton recovered the faculty in the fields. For its perfect exercise sound health is needed, and not too much poring over books, nor yet too deep an immersion in affairs. Very few people *can* have the faculty in its full strength, because so few have any opportunities of exercising it. There is no colour to be seen in our modern towns, and not very much of it in our ordinary English rural landscape under its usual aspects.* Here, in the Highlands, I have it in abundance, and enjoy it to the full all the year round ; but these deep purples slashed with emerald green, these wonderful silvery greys, this depth of glowing gold, these scarlet clouds of sunset, these rosy heights of snow, and coloured flames of the bright northern aurora—these things are not visible day by day to every citizen of London or Manchester. And so the sense of colour languishes from sheer want of its natural nutriment, and the houses of our rich middle class are covered outside with white stucco instead of coloured marbles ; and hung within with works of art in which black printers' ink is the only pigment used. And as colour is banished from these houses, so it is entirely banished

* Linnell's works show how much colour *may* be found in common English landscape ; but it needs to be watched for, because his grandest colour-effects are rare. The usual appearance of English landscape is better seen in Constable's green and grey than in Linnell's purple and gold.

from the festive costume of the men who live in them ; so that a party of English gentlemen after dinner form about as colourless a picture as you could find anywhere out of a coal-pit. White and black are not colour at all, though both very valuable to a colourist ; and if ever the capacity to enjoy colour shall be given to our descendants, one of the first signs of it will be their rejection of our black and white ideal of festive costume. Why should we all go into mourning every time we go to feast with our friends ? Is it because we all know beforehand that the dinner is going to be a dull and melancholy business, for which the most mournful possible costume is the most becoming and appropriate ? What a queer sight it is to see a dozen jolly Englishmen at a festive board, dressed precisely as if they had just been to a funeral, and hung up their crape hatbands in the hall ! Let any artist imagine what would become of the Marriage-feast at Cana, in the Louvre, if the gentlemen present were all to be dressed in black swallow-tails, with white cravats !

The effect of this indifference to colour as it concerns our art is of course a general indifference to painting, as such, because painting is especially the art of colour. And the recognition of our art in any country depends, primarily, on the delicacy of the sense of colour in that country. Now, there is no nation in Europe at the present day of which it can be truly said that it possesses the colour faculty in a national way ; some exceptional individuals possess it in each nation, just as some may possess the poetic gift. And so picture-buying is an exceptional direction of expenditure ; whereas, if the sense of colour were as generally acute as the sense of

taste, it would be as universal amongst all who could afford it as wine-buying is with us.

When this sense of colour begins to awaken, people begin to want pictures, but for a long time they believe in *copies*, and, in their private opinion, think them quite as good as the original works of great men. They cannot as yet distinguish between good and bad colour, and are very easily satisfied, anything like elaborate or subtle colouring being an offence to them. I saw a little girl learning French phrases one day, and had the curiosity to open her book, when I came upon a conversation about pictures, supposed to take place in some continental gallery, and which supplied young ladies with the necessary critical observations to be generally applied to pictures in galleries. Amongst them, of course, I found the following:—"Those colours are too lively, they should have been subdued," that being the stock observation of a whole class of people in the earliest stage of connoisseurship. Provided the hues be confined to brown and grey, they are considered right and safe by this class of incipient judges, when anything like nature's brilliance of various colour is rejected by them on system as glaring and false. This class of young beginners in picture-buying supports a class of artists of its own, consisting mainly of copyists and brown conventionalists, but of course never including a colourist.

These lovers of brown art are naturally victimised by false old masters, for these have the irresistible charm of plenty of thick brown varnish. Considering the extreme difficulty of estimating the value of works by the old masters, and the wildly artificial prices they fetch, it

appears rather a melancholy necessity in nature that the most inexperienced picture-buyers should throw themselves the most readily in a path so certain to be ruinously expensive, and so spotted with all manner of pitfalls laid by the most accomplished and scientific of swindlers. Nothing is easier than to buy the works of living painters; you go to their own studios, you see them personally, you have ascertained the current prices of their works, and you give them commissions, having settled the three questions of size, and price, and subject. There is little chance of your being deceived, every work so commissioned is quite sure to be authentic, and the painter's regard for his own reputation is your guarantee that he will do his best. The work is delivered to you new and sound, no tricks have been played with it, no clearing away of delicate glazes, no repainting by other hands, no brown varnishing to hide the crudity of bad colour. At any rate you see what you buy, and are not deceived. But when you lay out money in old masters, no such certainty is possible. Unless you are really a judge, and I ask your pardon for observing that this is extremely improbable, the chances are a hundred to one that you are buying a copy. You cannot refer to the painter himself, for he has been in his grave for centuries. And even if you were sure of their being genuine, the works of dead masters are, when worth having at all, so costly that private persons can scarcely afford to contend for them. Their prices are now out of all proportion to their merits, and merely represent the competition that exists for them amongst the great personages and governments of Europe. The Soult Murillo in the

Louvre, for which the French Government gave twenty-four thousand, six hundred, and twelve pounds, does, most assuredly, not contain as much good painting as you could get from our best living colourists for the same sum. No doubt it is possible that, being a living artist myself, I may unconsciously feel some degree of jealousy when I reflect upon a price so enormous; but how is it that I feel no jealousy of my most successful living rivals and contemporaries, but only satisfaction in their success? It is because, as a rule, they give a fair amount of good work for the money they receive, and, except in very rare instances, their pictures, though richly paid, are still bought with some reference to the amount of thought and art in them, not in blind and bigoted adoration of a great name. It is no honour to the art, nor any proof of a genuine interest and delight in it, when people show themselves so ostentatiously indifferent to the variety of its teaching and its pleasures that they would rather waste a fortune on a single canvass by an old master than buy thirty equally noble master-pieces by modern ones.

Whilst reflecting on this great subject, the buying of genuine old masters at artificial prices, and false old masters at swindlers' figures, I remember a novel that I read in my boat one day during the summer, when the breeze was faint, and she was gliding idly on Loch Awe.

In this story, which is entitled "*Cinq cent mille francs de rente*," there is a banker, M. Picard, who gets rich and buys false old masters, and is lamentably fleeced and swindled in all manner of ways. The novelist, Dr. Véron,

moralises a little on the subject. I will quote a paragraph or two, which especially suit my purpose.

“ On poussait Picard vers l'école italienne.

“ Dieu sait de combien de faux Raphaël, de faux Véronèse, de faux Titien, de faux Corrège, de faux Léonard de Vinci, l'Europe tout entière est encombrée !

“ C'est surtout avec les grandes écoles d'Italie que se fait sur une vaste échelle l'agio en peinture. On sait que les copies des plus belles œuvres abondaient déjà du temps des maîtres, et se brossaient même dans le voisinage de leurs ateliers. De nos jours encore, des copies des chefs d'école les plus recherchés se font à l'entreprise.”

Dr. Véron, it seems, is very much of my opinion as to the superior prudence of buying modern works direct from the artists themselves. If M. Picard had done so, we are told that he would not have been cheated and pillaged as he was.

“ Malheureusement, les nombreux fripons qui exploitèrent l'inexpérience de ce nouvel amateur avaient pris soin de le détourner du goût des œuvres modernes. *Si Picard eût visité les ateliers de nos artistes et leur eût fait des commandes, il n'eût point été grugé et dupé par tout ce vilain monde.*”

When people awake to the worthlessness of copies, they are in a fair way for learning something about real art, but do not buy judiciously at first ; no, nor for a very long time indeed. And for many years the desire for good art will probably remain so very faint and feeble, so entirely secondary to the love of sport, or gambling, or wine, or any other gentlemanly amusement, that the greatest artists can, as yet, only hope for

a few chance sovereigns that these ignobler pleasures may, by accident, have left at the bottom of the "patron's" holiday purse. There is an anecdote, in Mr. Gilchrist's "Life of Etty," which affords a most felicitous illustration of this.

"The manufacturer had that morning put in' his pocket 300*l.* to risk in the betting-ring, and had lost only 25*l.* of it. Willing to save the remainder, and lay it up in a more tangible luxury, he threw down 200*l.* in notes before the nervous painter, to whom money in hand was always a temptation."

I look upon that anecdote as quite inestimably precious. Who does not see the moral of it? The manufacturer is John Bull, Etty being the fine arts generally; and the betting ring, I fear, only represents too faithfully John Bull's favourite sports and pastimes. If any idle cash happens to remain in the bottom of John Bull's pocket after he has enjoyed his favourite amusements, he may, perhaps, invest it in the fine arts; and that is precisely his idea of what he is pleased to call "patronage."

With regard to the kind of pictures most generally bought, we may take the evidence of the exhibitions.

Little figure pictures sell best—rustic figures as well as any. Bits of incident connected with the domesticities take very well—mammias, and babies, and cradles, and that sort of thing. Returns of schoolboys, arrivals of interesting letters, scenes of wooing, and billing and cooing; all these are saleable subjects.

For the benefit of our rising artists, I subjoin a few hints which, if realized in the shape of pictures, would be sure of a ready sale.

1. Child upsetting its bath. Despair of nurse.
2. Small boy revelling in a masterpiece of confectionery (prepared for an evening party), and destroying its artistic proportions. Agony of his mother on beholding these ravages.
3. Old bachelor imprudently takes a baby on his knee. Baby vomits. Horror of old bachelor. Delight of mamma at baby's charming accomplishment.
4. A molly-coddle of a young husband kissing his unconscious offspring. Face of youthful mother beaming with heavenly ecstasy.
5. A double kiss. Mother kissing fat child. Above molly-coddle kissing mother.
6. Boy of four years old dragging after him papa's Cremona violin, ingeniously converted into a mud-cart by the removal of the belly. Mamma and nurse smile approval on the young mechanic.
7. Small boy having discovered a chisel and mallet, is artistically occupied in carving the leg of a fine rosewood piano. The artist is for the present undisturbed in the solitude of a magnificent drawing-room ; but we are led to infer that he will not carry out his conception without interruption, as the mirror informs us of the approach of mamma, as yet happily unconscious of her son's occupation. N.B.—In this picture all the drawing-room furniture to be most carefully imitated, even to the veins of the rosewood and the minutest toys on the table.

Subjects like these are sure of popularity, for the majority of purchasers are always in the first stage, which is marked by the love of the common-place, and

indifference to all that is noble in art, whether in subject or treatment.

It is also marked by absolute indifference to landscape ; an indifference which sometimes becomes more active and grows into a hostile feeling, to which landscape art is a cause of irritation and offence. A gentleman said to me one day, with much emphasis, " You know, I *hate* all landscapes." The observation, as addressed to a landscape-painter, may not have been very polite, but it was quite sincere, and accurately represented the feelings of a whole class of conventionally " well-educated " people.

Artists who minister to people in this early stage of culture are the most fortunate both in purse and reputation, because there is the largest circle of persons fit to appreciate their works. They may, of course, be just as good painters as those whose subjects are less popular, whilst they have the immense advantage of a more numerous public. In comparison with landscape-painters, they have the same odds in their favour that prose writers have when compared with writers of verse. Mr. Frith is the most fortunate example hitherto known in our art of the happy union of undeniable artistic ability with universal popularity of subject. Every Londoner has been to the Derby, and seen a railway-station ; so every Londoner is capable of understanding the subjects of Mr. Frith's great pictures. Mr. Leslie was rather less fortunate in this respect, being too literary to please the illiterate, and too fond of the past to enlist very strongly the sympathies of those who are absorbed in the noisy present. Etty, with his splendid idealisations

of Academy models, could scarcely ever be heartily appreciated, except by Academy students, because they are the only people in these days who are accustomed to see naked men and women.

The evidence of the exhibitions tends also to prove that, after domestic incident and rustic figures, our friends the dogs and horses have the best chance of popularity. Cows also, and even that uninteresting animal, the sheep, find numerous admirers. Thus Landseer and Rosa Bonheur are really *popular* artists ; whereas, if they had devoted themselves to the naked figure, like Etty, or to landscape, like Turner, they could not have been in this sense popular, there being no such phenomenon possible in the arts, as a popular artist with an unpopular subject. Landseer's art is enjoyed by a large class, for its connexion with their sports, and is valued by them just as they used to value coloured sporting prints in the last generation ; its noblest qualities being quite unappreciable by such persons. And Rosa Bonheur owed her immediate recognition in England *not* to her peculiar merits as an artist, which are of a kind not very popular here, but to the English love of horses.

The love of landscape is rarest and latest of all. It can only exist in a very advanced stage of civilization, when man has lost his first boyish interest in himself, and is beginning to look at the world about him. And the appreciation of landscape is only possible to persons who have habitually studied the noblest natural scenery, which persons are extremely rare, so that competent judges in this department of art are found in very small numbers. And landscapes are not the most saleable of

artistic merchandise—in France they are scarcely to be got rid of at all, unless enlivened by the presence of animals ; whilst in England they are even yet considered to belong to an inferior class of art, and an exhibition where they predominate is always spoken of as uninteresting by the newspapers. At Liverpool, landscape-painters are frankly informed that their works are not likely to find admittance, by the intelligible hint “ works of genre will be preferred.” Landscape-painters may reasonably desire an exhibition of their own ; but there is one little drawback—it would never pay. The receipts of the different academic bodies would probably not be diminished at all, but perhaps even increased, by the entire exclusion of landscape from their walls ; whilst an exhibition of landscapes alone would have no attraction for the general public, which would not visit it.

Nor do people pass suddenly from a state of repugnance to one of love and appreciation. The transition is extremely slow. They first tolerate landscape as a background to men or cattle, then gradually come to desire some degree of elaboration in it, and so imperceptibly arrive at that point where they can take some interest in common nature, though they will not as yet endure, and cannot comprehend, anything noble in effect or unusual in arrangement. And it is a fact extremely discouraging to all true and original landscape-painters, that even of those persons who like landscape, so few can endure anything like originality in it, that original genius and a strong and direct hold on nature are great obstacles to immediate recognition in their art.

The question how far landscape-painters ought to

condescend to the taste of the public, admits of a very brief reply. You continually find persons ignorant of natural aspects, who assert that painters have no right to represent effects which are to them unintelligible. It certainly may not always be prudent, from a monetary point of view, to paint such effects ; and many of our artists resolutely deny themselves the pleasure of painting them, in order that they may sell their pictures easily and bring up their families decently. But the question of prudence is one thing, and the question of right another. So far from having no right to paint what is not intelligible to the vulgar, the artist is under a great moral obligation to do it boldly from time to time for the advancement of art, even at heavy personal sacrifice. It is like uttering unpopular truth in literature. Writers who perceive truths which are offensive to their contemporaries, are nevertheless bound to give them full and fearless utterance, even at the cost of personal reputation. For the noble human faculties which perceive truth were not given to us without a grave responsibility, and it is our bounden duty to declare the truth, whether we get fame for it or obloquy.

A very curious characteristic of human nature in its *naïf* and unconscious state is, that it always gets angry at things it cannot understand. When I see a thoroughly *naïf* man, and there are many such, approaching something of which I know his ignorance beforehand, I can predict with absolute certainty that the thing, whatever it may be, will put him more or less out of temper. For the sense of ignorance is humiliating, and therefore very unpleasant, especially when it comes on one with a

sudden shock. A truly educated man feels no anger at any fresh discovery of his own ignorance, but rather pleasure, if he sees an opportunity of learning something, because the educated mind is always conscious of infinite ignorance, and the sense of ignorance is therefore not strange to it, but habitual.

This has a great deal to do with the position of art and artists.

Naïf people are always irritated when truths of nature, of which they are ignorant, are illustrated in painting.

I remember meeting with a Parisian tourist in the Highlands, who was quite seriously vexed at some cloud shadows he saw on a mountain, because he could not make out what they were. Had he seen the same shadows in a picture, his irritation would have been directed against the artist, to whom he would certainly have denied all ability. However, as he happened to see the fact in nature and not in oil-paint, he did not know what to be angry with, and so actually supposed the case of an imaginary artist that he might have the satisfaction of enunciating the following critical opinion :—" Well, whatever they are, no artist could have any business to paint them ; they are not fit subjects for art, which ought to deal with what is intelligible in nature."

"What is intelligible in nature?" Exactly. But *intelligible to whom?* Those cloud-shadows, represented in art, would be as intelligible to me as the shadow of a man against a wall. Here is the central point of the whole question. If we admit that art is to be intelligible, nothing is settled until we have also decided *to whom* it is to be made intelligible.

The fact is, that whenever any theorist tells us that the only proper province of art is the intelligible, he always means what is intelligible to *himself*, being angry at everything that is above his capacity, and strongly disposed to abolish it if he could. Thus people will often admit that Turner's effects may be true, and yet deny vehemently that he had any right to paint them, "as they were not fit subjects for art, because not intelligible to the spectator"—the word "spectator," of course, meaning the critic himself, as in these cases it always does.

What is the painter to do? Is he to omit the shadows of the clouds because Monsieur Badaud, in his dark street in Paris, will not understand them? Is he to omit the reflections in water, because some other people have never seen a calm lake? Where is the limit to be fixed? If we are to condescend to one person's ignorance, why are we to treat another less tenderly? In another chapter I have narrated a true story of a certain housemaid who could not make out what were those creatures which Rosa Bonheur innocently intended for cows. What right had Rosa Bonheur to paint them? They might be true, but you see they were not intelligible. Here was a pious, industrious person, of most respectable character, to whom these horned creatures were as great a mystery as cloud-shadows, or sunset-flames; and had not she *her* rights too? Is she to be insulted by an art which is to her unintelligible? "Oh, of course, you are not supposed to paint for domestics." My good sir, why not? If I am to paint down to the ignorance of one class, why stop there? Why not go a little lower still?

Why not be yet a little more accommodating, and prepare my work with perfect tenderness for the appreciation of domestic servants?

If once a painter admits the theory that it is his duty to make himself intelligible to persons ignorant of the facts of nature, he is for ever imprisoned in the narrow circle of *their* little knowledge. He cannot shut himself up in such a prison without losing all his vitality and power. So confined, his art will perish for lack of its natural and necessary exercise. Better for it to soar freely on strong wings, out of the range of the people's admiration, than to be kept as a pretty household pet, to die of languor in a narrow cage!

Money confers the power of paying for art, but it does not of itself give any knowledge of it. It is a common but very foolish mistake to suppose that our science and discernment increase with the balance at our banker's. People who are rich will always find flatterers to tell them they are clever, but there is no necessary connexion between a full purse and proficiency in special pursuits. In a general way it is reasonable to suppose that the rich man will know more than the very poor man, because he has better opportunities of acquiring information, and more time to bestow in the pursuit of it; but how if he employs his time and opportunities for other objects? All rich men do not study the art of painting from morning till night like professional artists, or like Mr. Ruskin, who gives it eight hours a day. As far as I have been able to observe, most of them seem to spend their time quite otherwise, its graver hours being devoted to the furtherance of their social ambition and the

management of their private affairs, whilst its hours of recreation are passed in field sports or in society. It is, therefore, very natural that they should not know much of art. Nor have I any illiberal feeling of contempt for them on that account, because there are many subjects I am as ignorant about as they are about painting, and for the same reason, namely, that I have never given the time and labour necessary for their acquisition. I am not a good lawyer, and cannot comprehend the details of an elaborate lease without professional help ; I am not a good farmer, and cannot trust my own judgment in the purchasing of sheep and cows, which Thursday does for me ; I do not even like to buy a horse on my own responsibility, and know that it is all a chance whether he turns out well or ill. But I know plenty of gentlemen whose judgment on these matters is quite reliable. There is General S., for instance, who is one of the very best judges of a horse in all England ; and there is Colonel T., whose opinion on cattle is beyond appeal ; and there is Mr. M., a great manufacturer and land-owner, who draws up all his leases with his own hand, like a professional lawyer, and knows no end of things about property of which I am disgracefully ignorant.

But if Michelet is right, this doctrine, which I so tiresomely preach, that people can only know what they have taken the trouble to learn, is not a popular one with that half of the human race which has the absolute government of society. “Elles aiment l'énergie et les grands résultats, le principe et le but, mais ne connaissent pas bien le long chemin qui mène au but, n'apprécient ni le temps nécessaire ni la continuité d'efforts, croyant que

tout s'enlève par des coups de génie, des hasards heureux de la grâce, elles ne sont sensibles qu'aux succès d'improvisation." And when he describes the hero of society, it is thus :—" C'est un roi tout fait des salons, un très bon juge en tout, accepté, invoqué des dames, et leur admiration. Il sait tout *en général*. Il leur plaît parcequ'il leur ressemble. Elles savent et font (quand elles font quelque chose) toujours *en général*. Elles restent à l'état *d'amateurs*, n'étant pas de force à comprendre les œuvres de conscience et les chefs-d'œuvre d'effort herculéen." The italics in this quotation are Michelet's own.

But it is not a creature of this graceful type, it is no king of drawing-rooms, no "amateur éclairé," who will ever be competent to judge of our art.

It is only some single-minded student who shall judge of it, one who devotes his whole life to, and concentrates all his powers on that one object, till the world thinks him the wildest of enthusiasts and the maddest of monomaniacs, till his talk becomes unintelligible from too much meaning, and his best eloquence obscured by endless allusions to mysterious things in nature, by him well known and loved, to the rest meaningless. He who has not stopped at the lighted threshold of knowledge, but penetrated its caverns of darkness, will not always talk very luminously : how can he ? Of what is evident he may speak brilliantly ; but of what is obscure, obscurely.

Such a student is Ruskin ; and seeing that he has exercised a great influence on picture buying in England for some years past, it is necessary to say something about him here.

He is not so easily judged as many people think. I shall attempt no analysis of his teaching in this place, because such an analysis would of itself occupy the room reserved for the whole of the present chapter. But I desire the reader to believe me, when I assure him that no true idea of the scope of Ruskin's teaching is attainable without fairly reading his books—it is not to be got from the reviews. I continually hear people accusing Ruskin of holding opinions which are the precise contraries of his true opinions, nor was ever writer so little read who has been so much talked about. The common reviews of his books usually contain internal evidence of a total ignorance of the contents of the very volumes they profess to criticise; and the opinions on Ruskin which are habitually expressed in society, are hardly ever founded on a fair perusal of his books themselves. But my own testimony concerning them is of undeniable value, being based on a thoroughly careful and repeated reading of every line which Mr. Ruskin has ever written about art, and fortified by an independent study of nature not less conscientious and elaborate than his own. And my testimony is this, that so far as concerns the art of painting, Mr. Ruskin's opinion is the most reliable opinion to be had at this day in Europe. I could easily prove that it is not infallible,* but it is enough for me that it is generally trustworthy.

* As, for instance, in an early criticism on Canaletti, whom Mr. Leslie defended as follows: "After describing, with much severity, the ripples in the open part of a canal, he (Mr. Ruskin) says (and in the way of censure), that 'three hundred yards away all the houses are reflected as clear and as sharp as in a quiet lake.' And most assuredly they are,

In many other matters I cannot agree with him, and I mention these differences of opinion here, that I may get due credit for sincerity in what I have to say of his writings on art. For example, on nearly every great question outside of the fine arts, we differ widely. I have not a word to say in favour of his sermons, and I think it very hard that we should have to pay for them, when we only want books on art. Why are the sermons not published separately? Why does not Mr. Ruskin have a chapel like Mr. Spurgeon, and so relieve himself in the regular manner?

And the theories of political economy! If Mr. Ruskin *will* go on publishing them, he will put all his sincere friends and admirers, myself amongst the rest, into a very unpleasant and most embarrassing position. It is no use for us to maintain any longer that on matters of art his opinions are reliable, because everybody answers us with a triumphant reference to those lamentable sermons that appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*. When a great writer is once resolutely determined to destroy his own reputation, it is no doubt well to do it as

because Canaletti painted what he saw; and the water as it approached the houses, being sheltered by them from the breeze, that occasions the ripple in the middle of the canal, was there as calm as 'a quiet lake.' Four years afterwards, Mr. Ruskin, by way of reply, said that his strongest gondolier was once blown off his perch into the canal, at his own door, and had nearly been brained on the doorstep.

When the wind at Dover blows from the *land*, the cliffs shelter the water at their feet; but when the wind blows from the *sea*, the cliffs afford no shelter, and waves and wind rush in their full strength upon the shore. Every cow knows that a wall which is to windward of her, will protect her against the wind, and so I imagine does Mr. Ruskin; only on this particular occasion he chose at once to amuse and mystify the public by the entertaining anecdote of the gondolier.

speedily, as publicly, and as effectually as possible ; but Mr. Ruskin's real friends cannot help regretting that he should have given his crudest thoughts to a million readers, through the medium of the most popular magazine of the day, and reserved his best for the odd thousand or so who study his own costly and voluminous works.

Still I earnestly beg of the reader not to allow himself to lose the good in so great a writer, because that writer has not had cunning enough to hide his weaker points. These apparent inconsistencies of character, these strange mixtures of strength and weakness, are, alas ! too frequently the accompaniment of high and peculiar culture. It seems as if men could not be specially cultivated beyond a certain level of quite ordinary mediocrity, without paying a terrible price for it. The human intellect is *never* strong enough to sustain a development at once original and universal ; and if its faculties are any of them to be trained to their highest possible strength, it must always be at the expense of the others. We are, therefore, to accept men of genius for what they are, and not expect them to be great and original in everything. I know another very noble and admirable author, who is the exact converse of Mr. Ruskin. His politics and philosophy are profound, and of immense range ; all his thoughts on these subjects being marked by the most masculine vigour and originality, yet his theory of art is the ordinary tradition. He will reason irresistibly on the history of opinion, and then tell you with quite a simple and touching modesty, that he believes all

pictures ought to be of a rich mahogany colour, because somebody told him so.

With regard to the contradictions to be found in Mr. Ruskin's writings, the reader ought not to refuse him his confidence on that account. I pray him to reflect that all men of capacity are constantly learning. If Mr. Ruskin were no wiser now than he was fifteen years ago, I should be sorry for him. What is the good of living, if we learn nothing? If the reader must needs have a rigid consistency in his teachers, let me assure him that he will have to choose parrot-teachers of mere traditions, not original thinkers. A good deal of Mr. Ruskin's contradiction is owing to his habit of thought being rather artistic than scientific; he gives the *aspects* of truths, rather than mathematical diagrams of them, and the aspects seem contradictory, as sketches of a mountain taken from different points of view seem to contradict each other, whereas a land-surveyor's plan of it seems consistent. So are the sketches, in reality but they do not look so to people unacquainted with the nature of mountains. But a good many of Mr. Ruskin's contradictions are *real*, and are due to his perfect frankness, which always expresses *moods* as well as facts. And of all the wise sentences that Emerson has given us, I know of none more eternally true than these mighty ones: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen, and philosophers, and divines. With consistency, a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now, in words hard as cannon-balls; and

to-morrow, speak what to-morrow thinks, in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day." Don't you perceive, that, if nobody were to be allowed to publish an opinion till he was incapable of improving upon it by farther reflection, nothing would ever get uttered at all, as every thinker would have to wait till he was dead? You may be quite sure that all men who really *think*, find that their views modify themselves continually, yet, as there is a natural consistency in the physical growth of a man, in spite of his visible transformations, so there is also a profound consistency in his intellectual growth; and when we think otherwise, it is always ourselves who have misunderstood his nature, not the nature which was inconsistent with itself, for that is impossible.

What I have read of Mr. Tom Taylor's criticism is almost entirely confined to his estimates of Leslie and Haydon, published by him editorially, with their autobiographies. He judges more as a literary man than as an artist,—I mean rather *intellectually* than *technically*, and is himself quite aware of this, as when he says of Leslie's art, "I am very imperfectly qualified to pronounce on the technical merits and demerits of Leslie as a painter. I venture what I say on this point subject to the correction of better-informed judges." Mr. Taylor also seeks to relieve himself from some of the responsibility of deciding on Haydon's technical defects, by calling in the assistance of a practical artist. On the other hand, his intellectual criticism is sound and just; and his opinions seem to be very carefully considered. I should think him well qualified for that peculiar department of cri-

ticism which deals with the expression and meaning of figure pictures, rather than their merit as mere paintings. The whole of the essay on Leslie, prefixed to his Autobiography, is well worth reading, and I should attach a very high value to the writer's opinion on any similar subject. And though Mr. Taylor is rather a representative of the most highly cultivated class *outside* of the art, than an accomplished art-critic (who ought to be as specially educated for his office as a professional painter), he has nothing in common with the traditional connoisseur. There is this very important distinction between critics like Mr. Taylor and connoisseurs; namely, that Mr. Taylor modestly limits his judgment to those qualities of a picture which, as a dramatist, he is quite able to comprehend, whereas your "connoisseur" always knows everything, and hesitates as little to pronounce upon the merits of opposite schools of art, as a Sheffield cutler on his especial sort of hardware, or a Lancashire manufacturer on his own particular twist.

The criticism of artists themselves is the precise converse of Mr. Taylor's. Whilst Mr. Taylor looks for intellectual and moral qualities, painters look exclusively for technical qualities. They even care very little, I am sorry to say, for truth itself in comparison with manual skill. Matters have not changed in this respect since the time of Sir Joshua Reynolds; and the following anecdote, from the memoir of him prefixed to his discourses, retains to this day its full value and significance:—

"A young painter, who had made several different designs for the composition of the subject he was about to execute, with a view of becoming a candidate for the

gold medal, brought his sketches to Sir Joshua, to have his opinion as to which was the best in point of sentiment, and the most descriptive of the story represented.

“Sir Joshua’s answer was to this effect :—‘You may choose whichever you please ; it will turn out precisely the same ; you are to recollect that your picture is to be judged of by painters only. *It will be the manual execution of the work, AND THAT ALONE, which will engross the attention of artists, and the degree of merit displayed in that part of the art is what will determine them in their election of the candidate for the prize.*’”

The consequence of this tendency in painters is that, when they write criticisms for the papers, as several of them do, anonymously, those criticisms refer so exclusively to mere manual skill that the people who read them may very excusably infer that the art is nothing more than a contest of skill in handicraft. And another result of this tendency is, that pictures, false as interpretations of nature, and foolish or vulgar in sentiment, find a ready admission to the exhibitions if only they have the required degree of cleverness in the trickery of the brush, whilst others full of noble feeling and refined truth are habitually rejected, if the handling is in the least unskilful or inexperienced. And, therefore, a clever artist is *not* usually the best judge of intellectual art, because he pays no attention to its intellectual side. The best critic stands half-way between Mr. Taylor and a professional painter, and sees at once both the technical and the intellectual qualities of a work. Mr. Ruskin stands much nearer to this position than any other critic.

The influence of critics, in literature of late years very limited, is in our art almost without limits. Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Tom Taylor, and one or two others, have an enormous power over the fortunes of artists whose reputations are not solidly established. It is a well-known fact that Mr. Ruskin's pamphlets on the Exhibitions had visible influence on the sales.* And I have heard of an instance where an adverse criticism, by another well-known critic, deprived a popular artist of all chance of

* The reader may remember a very melancholy and beautiful poem which was said at the time (on the authority of *Punch*, in whose pages it appeared) to have been composed by a Royal Academician. I believe I can quote the poem from recollection, for its mournful music lingers in my memory yet.

“ I takes and paints,
Hears no complaints,
I'm sold before I'm dry ;
When savage Ruskin
Sticks his tusk in,
Then nobody will buy.”

And there was a note too by the author to this effect : “ N.B. *Confound that Ruskin* ; it won't come into the poetry, but it's *true*.”

Here we have an instance of an accomplished gentleman who, having attained by his talents and industry to the highest artistic rank, is reduced at once to poverty by the hostility of a critic. Prosperity and happiness breathe in the first few lines of this poem, which opens like a sunshiny morning—

“ I takes and paints,
Hears no complaints,
I'm sold before I'm dry.”

This was indeed the sunshiny morning of the painter's life. But a malignant influence darkens all,—

“ When savage Ruskin
Sticks his tusk in.”

And there is a touching pathos in the last line which only a painter can adequately appreciate,—

“ Then nobody will buy ! ”

getting his living. The criticism may have been just, and very likely was; but it was a tremendous misfortune to its victim.

Mr. Ruskin himself takes a more encouraging view of the matter, which it is right to state in this place.

"I have never yet," he says, "seen even a bad picture crushed by criticism, much less a good one."

But in the Preface to the third volume of "*Modern Painters*," we find considerable influence attributed to criticism.

"The critics had done their proper and appointed work; they had embittered, more than those who did not know Turner intimately could have believed possible, the closing years of his life; *and had blinded the world in general (as it appears ordained by Fate that the world always shall be blinded) to the presence of a great spirit among them, till the hour of its departure.* With them and *their successful work* I had nothing more to do; the account of gain and loss, of gifts and gratitude, between Turner and his countrymen, was for ever closed."

From which it would appear that critics *have* some power for evil, after all.

The truth is, that picture-buying is a direction of expenditure almost entirely ruled by fashion, and criticism has an influence on the fashion itself. For example, Mr. Ruskin brought pre-Raphaelitism into fashion.

Until a painter is fashionable, the world remains quite insensible to his merits. When his name is *à la mode*, all his merits suddenly become conspicuous.

As far, therefore, as a critic may have it in his power to help an artist towards the fashionable point of the

artistic career, or hinder him from attaining it—so far he has power over his fortune.

The public reception of new painters, however richly endowed and carefully trained, is always very doubtful and hazardous. The world *may* like them, accept them, recognise them, or it may repudiate them. What it will do depends very much on the *sort* of talent the painter may happen to possess, not merely on the *degree* of it ; and it depends also on the numbers and power of the friends and supporters the painter may have, in society, amongst dealers, and in the press.

There are three sorts of judges,—the real judge, who knows enough of both art and nature to form an opinion at once well-grounded and independent ; the pseudo-critic or “connoisseur,” who judges by traditional rules ; and the simple unpretending lover of art, who enjoys it sincerely, but knows nothing at all about it, neither rules nor anything else, except the main fact of his delight in it.

Of these three sorts of judges the first is extremely rare, so rare that there are perhaps not more than fifty or sixty persons, not professionally devoted to art, now alive on the globe who belong to it. The second, on the other hand, is very numerous ; but all its opinions are worthless, and deserve no attention or consideration whatever. But the third class deserves our kindest sympathy and our best service, and we ought all of us to work well and willingly for it. It is these honest lovers of art who are destined to establish it more firmly here in England than ever it was established in Rome or Venice, by the authority of the magistrate, or the patronage of the priest.

And for such persons a painter works quite happily and with all his might. They can always get good measure of hearty labour out of him for their money.

And in order that I may write what I have yet to say on this matter in a cheerful, kindly, friendly spirit, I will forget all about irritating connoisseurs, and fancy that the reader is some dear soul who knows as little about great artists as I do of the stars, yet receives their light, and loves it.

Such a one will not buy pictures for ostentation, to show how rich he is. He may be as rich as Croesus, and yet incapable of this littleness. Neither will he buy them to show how clever he is, and how he understands mysterious treasures that are to the common people as pearls before swine. Nor will he lay out his money in mere obedience to the fashion, because, being capable of feeling, he is above the fashion, which rules thus absolutely only such as cannot feel. If he buys anything, it will be because he loves it.

Therefore, I may conclude at once, that he will have nothing to do with brown forgeries of ancient masters.

But it is very likely that he will covet some genuine work of theirs.

The inconvenience of this is, that such works are very difficult of attainment at anything like reasonable prices, being already absorbed into great collections.

And modern artists, what of them ?

If you want to form a collection cheaply and yet richly, you must buy the works of good painters *before* they become famous ; they will cost you ten times as much after. There is a certain epoch in every artist's life

when he is at his best ; and it very rarely happens that his fame and his faculties are at their full height together. The faculties usually begin to decline just when the fame is rising fastest. The time to buy is when the painter has just got to his level in point of work, but is yet far below the degree of reputation which his name must ultimately reach. This is your time to obtain his works. Ten or fifteen years later his prices will be doubled, trebled, quadrupled ; but his work will probably be worse, and there will be much less of it on the same area of canvass. For, mark you, there is one very valuable quality in the work of comparatively unknown artists, which you will never get from men of established reputation without paying for it enormously,—that is, *length of labour*. I have seen most delicately, most laboriously finished pictures, by young artists, seeking in vain for a purchaser at twenty pounds, when careless sketches, or small replicas, with a fashionable name, were easily sold in the same exhibitions at prices ranging from two to six hundred. If you are fond of nature, there is no kinder, nor, indeed, any wiser way of laying out your money, than in the purchase of truthful studies from nature by unknown men, because you are helping them in the most effectual of all ways, with great advantage to yourself.

In the formation of private collections, great attention ought always to be given to the *character* of the collection as a whole. Every collection ought to have a character of its own, and no work should be admitted into it which does not quite harmonise with that character. Nothing is more incongruous, nothing fatigues

the eye more than great differences of *scale* in pictures hung in the same room ; and there are different kinds of art, each good separately, which harm each other very seriously when seen together. In this respect the Vernon Gallery was anything but a well-selected one. We ought all to be very thankful to Mr. Vernon for leaving it to us, and it is scarcely right to look a gift horse in the mouth ; but I have rarely seen a collection which left so feeble an impression as a *whole*. Separately, the pictures are, many of them, of great excellence ; but the *collection* is brought together without any attempt at unity ; and the pictures help one another no more than odd volumes in a bookstall. The Sheepshanks' collection, on the other hand, is more consistently chosen. Again, of national galleries, the Louvre is as badly ordered a collection as could well be imagined, there being no proportion whatever in the space allotted to different masters ; it is a mere agglomeration, without any plan, in which the most precious things and the most worthless are stuck together like relics in some recent geological formation.

An *ideal* national collection would contain specimens of every great master who has lived on the earth ; but it would necessarily limit the number of examples of each painter, which ought, in every case, to be the very finest procurable for money. The number, in my opinion, ought to be limited to twelve. In twelve examples, masterpieces, carefully selected so as to illustrate the strongest period of the artist's career, a very sufficient idea might be given of all but the most versatile of painters. Each painter ought to have a room to him-

self,* with his name inscribed over the door, and on the walls within, in great legible golden letters, so that there might be no confusion in the minds of ordinary spectators as to whose work they were looking at. Under every picture there should be a detailed account of the intention of the picture, and its history (but no attempt at criticism or pointing out of "beauties"), engraved in legible characters on a tablet of marble as long as the frame of the picture, and on which the lower part of the frame should rest. Black marble would be the best, with the letters engraved and gilded. No catalogue whatever ought to be required, because it is wrong to put poor people to the expense of buying one. If, as is generally the case with painters, a portrait of the artist existed, there ought to be a marble bust of him, as truthful as possible, placed directly opposite the entrance with its back to the wall, and not above six feet from the floor, nor in the middle of the room, because that would impede the sight of his pictures.

Three or four copies of a brief biography of the painter should also be accessible in different parts of the room, legibly printed and simply framed, with a glass for protection.

Every picture should be hung with its horizon on a level with the eye of a spectator of ordinary stature, and

* "*It is of the highest importance that the works of each master should be kept together. No great master can be thoroughly enjoyed but by getting into his humour, and remaining long enough under his influence to understand his whole mode and cast of thought. The contrast of works by different masters never brings out their merits; but their defects: the spectator's effort (if he is kind enough to make any) to throw his mind into their various tempers, materially increases his fatigue.*"—*Ruskin.*

there should be a clear space of three feet at least between the larger pictures, and two feet between the smaller ones, which space should be filled up, if possible, with velvet of a dark maroon colour. If a nation is too poor to show its pictures to the best advantage (as that poverty-stricken country, England, appears to be), a flock paper, with slight pattern and all of one colour, is the next best thing to velvet.

It is not to be expected that a nation like Great Britain should be able to afford velvet for its picture galleries ; but a private speculator, who has established a permanent exhibition of pictures at Paris, was cunning enough to cover all his walls with it from top to bottom before he hung a single picture upon them, a piece of extravagance which would astonish our House of Commons if carried out, as it ought to be, in our National Gallery.

Arrangements such as these would do more to facilitate the study of painting in galleries than any one would believe possible who had not been accustomed to pass whole days and weeks in looking at pictures. The fatigue of such study, if undertaken in earnest, must always be very great, but it is now needlessly increased by a total absence of consideration for the convenience of the student. It is at present impossible for any one to study seriously in any public gallery without tiring himself to death in seeking out works which ought never to have been separated, and straining his eyes, and stiffening his neck, in vain endeavours to see pictures which are purposely hung so high as to be out of sight. Galleries like the Louvre are an affair of mere vulgar national ostentation : there are great treasures in them,

but no sign of any supposition on the part of their guardians that the treasures can be of any use. The great Rubenses in the long gallery are, it is true, hung *together*, but they are hung at least six feet too high, the only earnest endeavour after perfect hanging and helpful association in the whole collection having been bestowed on the worst pictures in any public gallery in the world,—the hideous series of illustrations of the life of St. Bruno, by Eustache Lesueur. *These* were hung in uninterrupted order, but the priceless Titians are carelessly scattered amongst other men's works, high or low, according to the caprice of the director or the convenience of the hangers.

These defects have hitherto, I suppose, been almost inevitable in national collections, which are accumulated gradually by successive governments, depend largely on bequests, and are usually given over to the care of personages who have little knowledge of, or interest in art. But such defects need spoil no private collection. The principle of giving a separate room to each artist may, in large houses, be carried out without inconvenience, and all the more easily if the owner has several houses. The practical difficulty of acting upon this principle is that ordinary rooms are often so badly lighted that pictures cannot be seen in them. A gallery may, therefore, be a necessary adjunct to houses which have been constructed without reference to the convenient study of art-treasures. The best gallery, however, would be a suite of small rooms, all lighted from above, and of which each should be dedicated to a particular master, in the manner already suggested for national galleries. If the owner were fortunate enough to possess a few pictures of great

size and importance, he ought to give a separate room to each of them, with no other furniture than a large and comfortable sofa, placed at the right distance from the picture. An ordinary exhibition, where a thousand paintings are incessantly occupied in doing each other as much harm as they possibly can, is the perfect type of what a collection ought *not* to be.

The supreme merit of any collection is UNITY. Every picture ought to illustrate and help the rest. And if the buyer keeps in view some great leading purpose, the unity will most likely come of itself, but it cannot easily be reached otherwise. Mere miscellaneous buying, according to the caprice of the moment, leads to the raking together of unrelated objects, but not to that beautiful and helpful order, which multiplies a million-fold the value of every particle.

Having presumed that the reader really loves art, I need scarcely hint to him the desirableness of such arrangements as will allow his pictures to be seen. If he cares for them at all he will certainly hang them, so that he can see them. There is no better proof of the stony insensibility of many owners of pictures than their habit of hanging them where not a creature except the flies can ever hope to behold them. *Whenever two pictures are hung one above another, one of them is sure to be out of sight.* Pictures hung in ordinary rooms, which people inhabit regularly, should not be crowded up to the very ceiling like an exhibition, but rather carefully isolated and distributed all over the house, such pictures only being allowed to remain near each other as are naturally fitted to be companions. They ought also to

be intellectually in harmony with the uses of the room. Illustrations of literature, and portraits of authors, have a greater value in libraries than in billiard-rooms. I enjoy good landscapes so heartily myself that I am glad to meet with them anywhere, but they have a better chance of being seen in drawing-rooms than in dining-rooms. A landscape is half lost unless you can see its detail, which from your seat at table is often impossible in a large dining-room. But a portrait of life-size loses nothing a few yards away. At the Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures, Gainsborough's imperious beauty awed the crowd, with her scornful eye, twenty paces off. Nothing is nobler in a dining-room than a series of lordly portraits by Vandyke or Reynolds ; but their successors of the present day have such terrible difficulties of costume to contend against that it would be a dangerous experiment to surround a scene of festivity with gentlemen in well-fitting waistcoats and highly varnished boots. And if you have any ugly portraits that you have an affection for, as is very likely, let them be placed in your most private rooms, where no guests come. They are better there for many reasons. It is in our calmest hours that the dead come back to us in memory ; it is then that we hear again their dear voices ; it is then that we recall most vividly their half-forgotten looks and gestures. The ugly portrait may be precious to *us*, but it cannot touch the hearts of strangers. Alone, we may look up to it through brimming tears ; but the world will not weep before it.

I think the prevalent idea that the purchasing of pictures is exclusively a luxury for very rich people who can afford *collections*, is unfortunate for the art. We all

of us buy books, though very few of us can afford a library ; why should we not all buy pictures too ? The most of us pay pretty heavy wine-merchants' bills ; and wine, though pleasant enough in its way, is no more essential than pictures. I see no other reason than this—that we like wine better. I say “we,” meaning the English generally : as to myself in particular, I can be happy without wine, but not without colour ; that I *must* have, either in art or nature, and I believe that if I were deprived of it I should die.

Every comfortable house ought to have three or four good pictures, at least *one* in each of its principal rooms ; but such a picture as its owner would not weary of, or else he must have more. And all good pictures are inexhaustible : some by a mysterious charm and fascination, as the melancholy portrait in the Louvre, opposite the great Veronese, or the face of the Mona Lisa ; some by their mighty poetry, as the *Téméraire* in the Turner Gallery ; some by a wonderful ideal of beauty, as the *Phryne* ; and some by fulness of matter and endless harmonies of colour, as the best works of John Lewis.

But if we are to have as noble pictures in our houses as the merchants used to have at Venice, we ought to have as noble houses to put them in ; not necessarily very big ones—our own are generally quite large enough—but houses glorious with fair architecture. Painting is my own art, and when I speak of it I may reasonably be suspected of exaggerating its importance ; but I shall incur no such suspicion when I advocate a nobler architecture than our ugly modern way of building. On the other hand, as all landscape-painters should understand

and love good architecture, and as I myself am passionately fond of it, I may, without presumption, protest against the hideousness of our houses. There has been as much money spent on English country seats as would have built three or four Venices, and yet there are very few of them that one could endure to paint ; and such as are fit for pictorial treatment, are so rather by reason of mere quaint picturesqueness than any high architectural excellence ; the corrupt and barbarous Elizabethan being the most effective domestic style we can boast. And in our treatment of such old buildings as we possess, we have almost all of us sinned against their builders, either by “modernizing” in the last century, or “restoring” (which means *destroying*) in this.* I cannot tell what is to come in the future—whether we are always to live contentedly in square boxes with oblong holes in them, as at present, or whether we shall inhabit worthier dwellings. For it is conceivable that human habitations might be erected which might stand alone in the fields, and not be utterly shamed by the contrast between nature’s glory and their meanness ; buildings whose marble walls might lift themselves against the blossoming trees, themselves variegated with hues not less exquisite ; mansions whose sculptured portals might in some degree respond to the infinite sculpture of natural leaves and branches in the depths of their ancient woods.

It is well known that our neighbours at Paris have a

* A lamentable instance of “modernization” occurred in my own family. My grandfather’s brother destroyed one of the most interesting old towers in the north of England by piercing the walls with a quantity of square-headed sash windows, and putting Ionic pillars in the principal doorway.

wonderful amount of good taste in everything, from vast palaces down to boxes for bonbons. But I see no reason to despair of our advancing in great art merely because we have so little of this good taste of theirs. I like their taste heartily, and think it infinitely pretty and graceful whenever it comes out in its full spirit and vivacity ; and I enjoy the products of their inferior arts as much as anybody ; still I do not see any reason to doubt our natural capacity for great art merely because we show none for little art. The same French eyes which choose millinery and upholstery with such judgment that all the world accepts their decision as authoritative, will endure colouring in pictures so vile and degraded as to act like poison on finer organizations. A lady may have perfect taste in her house and furniture, her equipages may be unexceptionable, her toilette the envy of her sex, and yet for all that she may be as unconscious of the meaning of nobleness in art as a plain English cotton-spinner's wife, living in a square brick box, and innocently wearing things ugly enough to frighten you. And I doubt strongly whether some of us English who like pretty sham Gothic churches, with benches of stained deal and mechanical mouldings, neatly cut, better than the hideous old churches of a hundred years ago, and who are beginning to dwell in " Gothic " cottages with mullioned windows instead of the old brick boxes, are, after all, very much nearer to Giotto, or any more capable of comprehending great architecture or great painting, than our poor benighted grandfathers, who cared for none of these things. One day I drove through London, and turned down Bond Street, much interested in the super-

lative ugliness of all I saw (except a few fair faces, that God, not man, had made). But I turned into a room in Bond Street, where I found great colour-art in its highest manifestation, and afterwards looked on London streets with less aversion, since they had produced such a painter as Hunt. Later the same day I made my way along Piccadilly, to South Kensington, much puzzled, and even amused, at the transcendent hideousness of certain architectural efforts which adorn that famous drive. I had seen them often enough before, but having been long occupied amongst the fair colours and noble forms of nature, the colouring of Piccadilly seemed to me more dirty and dismal than ever, and its deformities more repulsive and depressing. But at Kensington I found the "Phryne," full of palaces and resplendent with exquisite hues; and the man who painted that was a Londoner too. And it seems to me very questionable whether the inventors of pretty fashions and nice bon-bon-boxes are any nearer to such men as these than plain country dressmakers and grocers' boys who make up common brown paper parcels.

Let us have the great art if possible, and we need not trouble ourselves much about the little art. If we can produce the little art ourselves, good; but if we cannot, it does not much matter, for we can always import it in any quantity from France.

"But," you say, "we cannot afford your great art, as you call it; it costs too much money. You would have us lay out hundreds of pounds on pictures. We are not rich enough yet; we cannot afford it."

You can afford it if you choose, but not if you live as

you are doing at present. Noble art is, and must be, very costly ; but we could afford it if we cared enough about it to make any sacrifices for it. We are like children who spend all their sixpences in gilt gingerbread instead of saving them to buy something of permanent value and interest. And it is characteristic of all who value noble things that mean things have no charm for them. If you should ever care for artistic costume, your tailor's bill will not be increased, but probably very much lessened in consequence, merely because to anybody who knows what beautiful dress really is, all our modern dress is equally ugly, and a crossing-sweeper seems to him quite as well dressed as a dandy. If you should ever comprehend the whole scope and meaning of nobleness in art, you will become supremely indifferent to, and justly scornful of, that sort of costliest splendour which depends merely on expenditure ; it will be no satisfaction to you to have scores of silver plates merely because they *are* silver ; nor will miles of gilt mouldings give you one gleam of pleasure. A mossy stone will be more precious to you then than a hewn palace of soulless architecture ; and the common wild flowers in the grass seem infinitely more to be desired than acres of ugly carpets. And the gold you shall save from the extinction of all frivolous wants shall from time to time be laid out wisely and cautiously in sources of perennial pleasure. Gradually your modest rooms, though they glitter no more with unintelligent ostentation, shall glow with the reflection of all that is fairest in nature and the expression of all that is most elevated in thought. And you in the midst of

this shall assuredly share in the benefits of so blessed a revolution; all vain pretension, all weak frivolity, banished for ever from your life, as all vanity from your habitation, till the balanced harmony and perfected grace of your ennobled nature shall equal all that is most excellent in art, and you shall sit surrounded by images noble and good, yourselves nobler and better, fearing no rivalry of painted hero or heroine, of sculptured goddess or king!

A secret worth knowing for new families is this, that the fine arts make a new name glorious sooner than anything except personal fame. After the Paris Exhibition of 1861, Count Walewski made a speech to the artists who exhibited, towards the conclusion of which I find these true and remarkable words:—"S'il se fait quelque part, à coups de dés, une fortune rapide, ne l'enviez pas . . . ne vous irritez pas . . . elle viendra à vous pour être légitime. . . . Jadis elle eût acheté des parchemins; elle achète aujourd'hui des tableaux; . . . c'est aux arts qu'elle demande ses titres de noblesse."

A man who has his place in the world to make for himself ought to study the philosophy of the association of ideas. People are hardly ever esteemed for what they are, their names are bound up in the popular mind with certain associations which are not severed from them for an instant. And if you understand this law of associated ideas, and can avail yourself of it to increase your influence, you will have all the world at your feet. We are all of us victimised by this tendency, but the vulgar yield to it utterly, and quite unconsciously, so that by this means you may play upon them, and do exactly what you like with them. Before the Crimean

war you could not wear a beard in country places in England, because the people all associated the idea of a beard with a belief in Johanna Southcote (a religion which did not command their veneration); but now you may wear one, because the associated idea it calls up is of a Crimean soldier, which is more manly and heroic. The old names are great and respected on account of their associations with antique houses and parks, but a new man may tie associations to his name in ten years, which will give him advantages quite as puissant as any that mere antiquity may afford. The great secret is CULTURE. Our modern society intensely respects culture *in wealthy persons*—it does not respect it much in poor ones, because it does not clearly see how culture can make a poor man powerful. But it sees very clearly that the rich man who adds intellectual attainment to money power is lord of all things on the earth, and it does not merely tolerate such a man, it worships him. Now the vulgar perceive that cultivated men always like books and pictures, so when they see that a man spends money in books and pictures, they instantly associate the idea of culture with his name. And the name of a man who lives in a house whose outside is glorious with architecture, and whose interior is a treasury of art, sounds just as well in the world's ear as if he lived in a ruinous old mansion that had belonged to his family since the middle ages. I do not mean that the vulgar ever feel the real value of such art, but they stand in awe of it, as a French peasant who sees his priest reading prayers in an unknown tongue, hears a confused unintelligible murmur, of which he cannot comprehend one

syllable, and yet kneels down subdued in simple awe and fear.

And when you hear people talk about "vulgar wealth," as some of us, especially poor descendants of old families, are a little too apt to do, be assured that wealth in itself is never vulgar, quite the contrary. It is apt to make people very ridiculous who cannot manage it, just as a fine horse will sometimes make a bad rider look sufficiently absurd who might have walked on foot in quite a dignified manner, but neither bank-notes nor fine horses are in themselves either vulgar or ridiculous. The only thing that most people can safely do with money when they have not been accustomed to it, is to save it, and not leave the class they were born in; but if they have capacity for sudden culture, and can acquire (as some can, and do), in the intervals of business, ideas as large and elevated as those attained by gentlemen in the leisure of a whole life, *then* let them spend as they like, their money can never by any possibility look vulgar. Expenditure is the expression of a man's mind, and an expression as clear and forcible as language, whilst it is usually a great deal more honest and frank. Even saving, like silence, is an expression, and very often means a prudent ignorance, which does not feel a strong attraction towards noble things, and fears to commit itself. But all attempts to reach the results of combined wealth and culture *by wealth alone* fail of their effect inevitably on superior persons, though they impose on the vulgar. If a man buys books that he cannot understand, somebody will find him out very soon. And if he buys pictures he is not qualified to

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comprehend, he will never *possess* them nor look as if he were their owner. Some poor visitor very likely will read the books and study the pictures, and this poor visitor will possess them. Men of genius possess everything they see, and if you remove the object they possess it still, having seen it. But ignorant and brutal persons, though nominally they own millions, in reality own nothing that wealth can procure, except the pleasure of being powerful, and the satisfaction of all the bodily appetites.

The question of the relative position of money and talent, and the advantages of each, is continually alluded to in literature, but one very important consideration has escaped all the writers I have ever read. They always take it for granted that when a man has talent, everybody will be aware of the fact, and they often argue that the world does not respect talent, when the real truth is, that the world is only not aware of its presence. Distinguished intellectual gifts are *always* respected, but they differ very materially from money in the inconceivable difficulty of ascertaining their exact degree. Genius and talent are entirely beyond the measuring powers of the human race. They cannot be weighed or expressed in pounds avoirdupois or Troy ; they cannot be divided and calculated in decimals ; they cannot be expressed in terms of feet and inches solid or superficial. What are you to do ? Are you to judge by performance ? This is the ordinary, perhaps the only, way of settling claims to intellectual power, but there is a little practical difficulty. Where is the infallible judge ? Not on this earth, certainly ; and the Supreme

Being who alone could decide such questions, will not, out of His tender and fatherly compassion for inferior intellects, reveal the real order of human intellectual rank, and so lend to the tyranny of mind the support of His irresistible authority.

Money has always an immense advantage over talent in its absolutely positive character and universally appreciable degrees. Nothing but physical strength is comparable to it in this respect. These are quite undeniable gifts. A man who can lift a quarter of a ton, or spend ten thousand pounds sterling every year, will find nobody to gainsay either the one fact or the other, because the evidence is quite irresistible and intelligible to everybody. But a degree of genius, as much beyond common capacity as the revenues of an emperor surpass the pay of a private soldier, may, and in all probability will, be very generally ignored and denied during the life-time of its possessor. The inequalities of human capacity are as great as the inequalities of wealth, but not so obvious; if they were, talent would always be insupportably tyrannical, and whoever happened to be the most richly endowed person in this respect in any particular community, would, if the fact were as patent as a mere pecuniary superiority, entirely destroy the liberty and prevent the healthful exercise of all inferior intelligences. Yet the mask that all the brightest souls wear on earth, and the modest disguises in which Heaven clothes them, place them in a position of great disadvantage in the presence of tangible wealth. There is the magnificent quality which somebody has called "I-don't-care-a-damnateness" about all rich men, to a degree which

no talent, not universally recognised, would dare to assume in general company. And the contempt expressed by rich stupid people for clever poor ones always carries with it great weight and authority, on account of the undeniable merits of the purse ; whereas, when the clever fellows retaliate, *their* arrows, though directed with far superior precision and skill, always seem to fall on armour-plated fortresses.

It appears generally that the noblest things are not patent to everybody. The splendour of true genius, the infinite strength and power of love, the sublimest heights of moral greatness, may be possessed or attained by people who pass through life quite noiselessly, or even by those who incur much odium and contempt, on account of their nonconformity to foolish customs, which their neighbours would compel them to observe. And these things cannot be measured accurately in figures, like muscular force and money.

When we accord respect to talent, it is always with a reserve, because we feel that, after all, the talent may turn out to be not quite so great as it claims to be. But we respect money without any such reserve. Consequently, we respect places and dignities which are accessible to money alone, more than we respect those which are accessible to capacity alone. It would not lower the worldly rank of Academicians if the honours of the Academy could be offered for public sale ; on the contrary, it would tend to give them a firmer footing in society, provided always that the honours were sold at a heavy price. If, for example, twenty thousand pounds had to be spent in bribes before a man could be elected

a member of the Academy, the position would become, in the strictest social sense, respectable. There is not an army in Europe whose officers enjoy so high a social position as ours, and this difference is certainly due to the fact that in England military commissions are bought and sold. I do not think that the peerage would lose one jot of its power over the popular mind if dukedoms were publicly sold for five hundred thousand pounds apiece, and the inferior coronets in proportion. But if, on the contrary, poor men were made peers, however talented they might be, the title of peer would immediately sink into public contempt, and our vulgar classes would think such nobility shadowy and unreal, as at present they consider foreign nobility, however ancient and illustrious in descent, merely because it is so often unaccompanied by wealth. If talent were easily estimable in terms of money, and were a commodity which a man could separate from himself and sell, it would be looked upon as estate and respected accordingly. Probably one reason why we hold natural talent so exceedingly cheap is, because it cannot readily be turned into cash, and never cost any. We respect a person who has received a fashionable education, because that is a very costly affair, and a form of luxury whose expense it is easy to estimate. And when we respect a highly educated man of genius, it is rather the education which we respect than the genius.

And all this chiefly because money is positive and measurable, whilst talent is doubtful and immeasurable; and also because talent, though tremendously powerful in some of its manifestations, is so very uncertain in its effect upon the world, that its power is not to be reckoned

upon. Money power, on the other hand, though more rigidly limited, is always definite and sure.

We may get a very clear idea of the social position of mind, and the difficulty of estimating it, if we consider for a moment how difficult it would be to establish rules of precedence on avowedly intellectual grounds.

It is much better that precedence should be regulated by titular rank, and in default of that by office or wealth, than by any attempt at intellectual estimation. Our present system of precedence need hurt the self-love of no one. A may take precedence of B because A is a marquis and B only a commoner, and this does not hurt B's estimate of himself, because rank of this kind has nothing to do with personal qualities. In like manner, official rank need not hurt individual feelings much. Bob Smith and I meet in society; Bob Smith's father was a tinker by trade, but Bob struggled up into the Church, and so takes precedence of me, who am only a painter. This need not hurt me. It only means that in the present state of civilization preaching is more respected than painting—a simple fact, for which I am not responsible. Or let precedence go by riches, if you like; I see no objection. Suppose I have twenty thousand pounds (sweet supposition!), and my neighbour can prove that he has thirty, he is a better man than me by ten thousand pounds, as old Osborne would have said, and is quite welcome to take precedence of me on that ground if he likes, *provided the ground be fairly stated and understood*. But any precedence supposed to be grounded on intellectual or moral qualities is always an exceedingly delicate matter, being directly personal and very difficult

to settle without injustice. If A's picture is hung at the Academy, and B's is not, it requires real magnanimity in B not to feel jealous of A. In cases where the pursuits are not identical, as, for instance, between men of science and artists, it is generally quite impossible to fix relative intellectual rank ; whereas, however different may be the occupations of tradesmen, their result in wealth admits of a common formula, and whether you sell calico or sugar, the profits are all expressible under the three letters *£ s. d.*

The sort of power that money possesses over talent is pretty well understood in these days. Money is the Lamp of Aladdin, genius and industry are the slaves of the Lamp. And the holders of the Lamp do not always use its power quite wisely. If they do not ask for roc's eggs, they ask for things which will do them as little good when they might have magical treasures.

A great deal of the manufacture and repetition with which painters are often taxed is not their fault, but the fault of the purchasers. Picture buyers have a pernicious habit of holding painters down to mere reproduction of stock effects and ideas. When a picture happens to be popular, the artist, unfortunate in his good fortune, is thenceforth too frequently the victim of his own success. Purchasers, distrusting or not comprehending the range and extent of his capacity, give him interminable orders for subjects of a similar character, to the great detriment of his artistic advancement. It is no real evidence of kind feeling to an artist, or genuine interest in his advancement, to order from him repetitions of his own works. And there is another kind of repetition equally

fatal to progress—the repetition of *ideas* with some variety of subject. An artist succeeds with a particular effect, and buyers encourage him to repeat it till everybody comes to consider it inseparable from the man—a part of his “style,” as they call it.

The feeling which prompts this narrow encouragement of art is common also to the buyers of books. In an article on Thackeray, in the *Westminster Review*, I find the following allusion to the discontent of many readers at the continued progress of the novelist :—

“ Readers regretted that the later narratives ran on in a broader and more historical stream, or supplied less microscopic detail and smartness of satire on neighbours slightly disguised : whilst again, familiarised with these by ‘Vanity Fair’ and ‘Pendennis,’ they were not ready to recognise the higher aim, more ideal at once and more real, of the ‘Esmond’ narratives, or do justice to the calmer breadth, subtler humour, and more complete characterization of the ‘Newcomes.’ ”

All artists, whether in words or colours, find that, as they themselves advance, they have to draw their admirers after them—not an easy matter even for authors, but still less easy for a painter, whose customers are able very effectually to restrain his steps as he endeavours to advance towards higher or newer ground.

This chapter is already too long ; but I must yet tax the reader’s patience a little farther, and invite him to consider with me what the future of art is likely to be in England.

I remember reading a discouraging theory in a newspaper, to the effect that the present extended apprecia-

tion of the fine arts was a mere *fashion*, and would very soon give place to some other fashion ; that no dependence whatever could be placed on the constancy of the public, which changed its objects from mere caprice, like a great baby ; that it was pleased with pictures to-day, but would want other toys to-morrow.

If this were indeed so, we should all of us be painting to very little purpose ; and it is certainly a matter worth consideration how far the fine arts are in future likely to associate themselves with the national life of the English people.

I have great hopes for my country in this respect—hopes which may seem extravagant to my contemporaries, but which I firmly believe the future will realize. I will state here what those hopes are, and on what signs they are founded.

Thousands of people in England are hoarding up money, and saving great fortunes, of which they will never spend above a tenth part of the annual interest. Most of these people hoard in this way because they have no culture, and are therefore quite independent of all the wants that culture awakens. They do not desire books, nor pictures, nor leisure for the pursuit of knowledge, nor the society of educated people. They devote themselves to no absorbing science like Humboldt or Lord Rosse, so they spend no money in costly expeditions or gigantic telescopes ; they do not give themselves up to art like Mr. Ruskin, so they do not spend money on pictures and travelling ; they never read books, so they do not, like Southey, invest money in a library ; they feel uncomfortable in refined society, so they escape all

the expenditure it entails. The one thing they appreciate is *power*—the power, that is, of a large proprietor—and this is what they are all trying to become. Now it is this class, dead as it is to art, which is destined to render it the most effectual service.

These people are making *large* fortunes, and, for obvious reasons, when they have children, they always get them educated up to the highest possible point. Their children, then, will be very rich and very well educated, so far as education may be had for money. And these children, when they inherit large fortunes with all the wants of culture, will most certainly gratify those wants to the utmost. They will have books and pictures. The intellectual poverty of their father's houses will of itself cause an irresistible reaction towards culture. The bare walls will become glorious with art, and thousands of volumes will line their libraries.

The kind of encouragement the fine arts have to expect from such a class as this may already be foreseen with certainty. There is this great good in all honest picture buyers who buy a good picture because they like it, and not because some connoisseur tells them, namely, that they encourage natural art in preference to conventional art, preferring good modern landscapes, painted from nature, to bad copies from Gaspar Poussin; and good modern figure-pictures of people as they are, to grand classical conceptions of people as they are told they ought to be. What art wants in the way of encouragement is not so much *learned* encouragement, that pretends to know more than artists themselves, and condescends to "patronise" them, as a helpful and trustful

encouragement, which asks mainly for truth, and expects the painter to do his best to obtain it. And, I think, the tendency of modern picture-buying is towards this right understanding of the relation of money to art. The world is beginning to understand at last that a *true* painter may always be trusted to the uttermost, because he cares far more anxiously for the excellence of his work than even the future possessor of it can ever care. And the world is more interested in works of art, too, in the right way, with simple enjoyment, not cold critical prying and appraising as formerly.

When every house shall have good art which now has good literature, a good natural art will be provided to supply the want—an art neither beyond the sympathies of our richer middle class, nor beyond its purse. That class will, of course, understand works of genre before it comes to understand landscape, but I do not despair, even for landscape; for it seems to me that people cannot be in the habit of travelling every autumn without eventually perceiving natural beauty, more or less, according to their capacity. And they will perceive, too, in the Exhibitions, how nature is interpreted by art, and, in time, understand the symbols of the interpretation, so as to come to know what the painter is aiming at. Once this point reached, the walls of a hundred thousand houses will begin to glow with the preciousness of faithful art.

As death gradually removes the collectors one by one, they will naturally feel the desire common to all their order (and quite reasonable too), *to keep their treasures together*. For the pictures when separate are the work of the artists who painted them; but their helpful asso-

ciation is the work of the collector alone, and a work requiring very high qualities of judgment and right feeling. Now no man likes the idea that his life's labour will be annihilated at his death; and collectors find great bitterness in the thought that what they have so carefully associated will be dispersed as widely as ever when they are gone. And, if the public only has the sense to avail itself of this feeling in collectors of works of art, it may come to possess splendid galleries for the mere cost of the necessary buildings to keep them in.

An initiative only is wanted, and Manchester will give that. Every town in England of sufficient importance to have a lecture hall or a concert room is also large enough to have a free gallery. They may be deterred from this for some time by the impression that they cannot afford to fill such galleries with works of art, but this is a needless anxiety. The galleries would be filled in a hundred years by gifts and bequests, and until then it would be well to remember that pictures look none the worse for being well isolated; and that, if there were a few yards of space between them for the first twenty years, they would be seen all the better for it. Let the galleries only be *large* enough, so as to invite contributions, and the contributions will come; but, if our municipal bodies do with the provincial free galleries, what the Government has hitherto done with the National one, that is, discourage contribution to the utmost, of course they need not hope for very many contributors. The Vernon collection was first put into a dark cellar, and afterwards on the ground floor of an empty old house, where no picture could possibly be

seen ; next, it was removed to a temporary structure at Kensington. The magnificent Turner bequest was treated with no more consideration ; and, therefore, when Mr. Sheepshanks presented his gallery to the nation, the gift was accompanied by the condition, that it should have a building of its own. I firmly believe that, if the Government had erected a National Gallery twice as large as the Louvre, and invited private individuals to fill it, it would have been filled in a hundred years, and that most richly. All collectors, all living artists, should be encouraged to contribute pictures to the National Gallery, a responsible council having the power of declining unsuitable offers ; and the nation would thus obtain immense numbers of valuable works for the mere cost of the wall to hang them on.

If this book should fall into the hands of any one possessing sufficient local influence to determine the *form* of a provincial public gallery, let me entreat him to consider that a picture-gallery is, after all, a place to see pictures in, and not architecture, and, therefore, that whatever architectural splendour is admissible, should of course be quite subordinate to the main object of showing the pictures. If you ask an architect for a design for a gallery, he will sacrifice three out of four of all the pictures you can ever hope to get together, to what he considers an imposing architectural effect. He will build you magnificent halls, when, in fact, a large weaving-shed with the looms out would serve your purpose much better. I have seen extensive weaving-sheds in the manufacturing districts, which, at very little cost, might have been turned into far better picture-galleries than

any palace in Europe. Let its roof-lights look to the north, and have common deal partitions to hang the pictures upon, and such a weaving-shed would be an unrivalled gallery, such a gallery as there is not at this moment in any metropolis in the world. It would be far better than the Louvre with its lofty halls, and incomparably superior to our dingy National Gallery and Royal Academy with their dining-room proportions. The main cost of a really good picture-gallery would always be in land, for a perfect gallery, where every picture would be on a level with the eye, and lighted from above, would of course occupy an immense area, but the site might be made to pay for itself, by having a structure of great length with plenty of street frontage, the ground floor and cellaring being let for shops and warehouses, provided, always, that an intermediate story of fire-proof empty brick chambers were constructed between the merchandise and the pictures. An incongruous idea, perhaps, you think, to put the wares below and the pictures above. On the contrary, quite a natural juxtaposition. Art is always based upon and supported by commercial prosperity, and the world's best masterpieces would only be in their right place with stores of merchandise under them.

And, above all, hold fast the golden rule for a picture-gallery, *never to hang two pictures one above the other*. As surely as you break this rule you put one of them where it cannot be seen; in other words, you sacrifice it so long as it remains there, almost as effectually as if you locked it up in a box.

Picture-galleries, whether public or private, are the

simplest things in the world to build, yet nobody seems to know how to build them. The fact is, that the problem is so extremely simple and obvious, that learned and clever people will not condescend to pay any attention to it. The problem is merely this, to shelter a picture from the weather and yet allow of its being seen. Well, since the invention of glass, where is the difficulty? I notice that for things people really care to show they manage much better. For instance, when a tradesman wants his advertisement to be read, he does not, if the print is small, paste it up on his third story, but wafers it to his glass window at a height of about five feet from the pavement of the street, so as to be level with the eyes of the passers-by. But our picture-hanging generally seems to proceed on the supposition that lovers of art are endowed with wings, and can poise themselves before a picture near the ceiling of a lofty hall, like a bee contemplating a blossom.

In conclusion, I desire to offer a few observations on the prices of pictures, a subject not uninteresting to buyers.

Pictures which require enormous amounts of time and labour for their production must always be heavily paid for, if painters are to maintain any such decent rank in the world as will allow them to marry, and keep their families out of the two abysses of ignorance and dirt, into which a certain degree of poverty infallibly drags people. It is all very well for Mr. Ruskin to assign a miraculously small sum as wages on which a painter will do good work; and there is no doubt that noble painters will work nobly for nothing *when they can afford*

it, whilst ignoble painters will always work ignobly, however you pay them. But the noble work is obtainable for money from noble persons at times, when even from them you could not obtain it without money, *for the simple reason that they may not always happen to be rich enough to devote their time to an unremunerative pursuit.* And, mark you, there *are* conditions, and very common ones, though easily overlooked by rich people, which enslave the very best and noblest intelligences to money almost as absolutely as the basest. So long as he is a bachelor your noble painter will scorn money with all his heart, but a husband and father cannot scorn it. He may face death for himself, but what of his little ones? Can he face *their* death with equanimity, or hers whose peace is so precious to him? And the nobler he is, the more bravely will he sacrifice his own ambition to that peace, and the most etherial natures will turn the most readily to the humblest drudgery of the world if their higher aims are incompatible with the life and happiness of those they love. And a great deal of the greed for lucre with which we English are so commonly reproached is due to the strong development of the paternal and conjugal affections in most of us, strongest of all in the best of us. So that to say of a *married* artist that he ought to be absolutely indifferent to money is as if you were to say that he ought to be absolutely indifferent to the health and life and happiness of his wife and children, or, in other words, that in order to be a good painter, a man must be an unnatural parent and a heartless husband.

The largest sums given in our day for pictures by

living artists seem, no doubt, very extravagant to persons who know nothing of the toil involved in a great work. Thus Turner refused five thousand pounds for his two Carthages, and we know that Horace Vernet received four thousand for a group of portraits; that Holman Hunt received five thousand five hundred guineas for his "Finding of the Saviour in the Temple;" that Mr. Frith received three thousand for his "Derby Day," and eight thousand seven hundred and fifty guineas for his "Life at a Railway Station."

Now I do not pretend to say that in every one of these cases the amount of labour given bore a strictly accurate relation to the price, though in Hunt's case it certainly did; but I say that it is impossible in our present state of civilization for married painters living like decently comfortable tradesmen, and giving good educations to their children, to devote *years* to the execution of pictures, which are only to sell for one or two hundred pounds. Painters must get their incomes out of the sale of their pictures, and as very few painters sell everything that they do, the prices of those works which find a purchaser must be high enough to pay for the time bestowed upon those which remain on the artist's hands. Again, all the travelling expenses of landscape-painters, and the hire of models, purchase of costumes, and rent of ateliers for historical painters, have all to be paid for out of the pictures which sell, as well as the colourman's bills, often very heavy in the case of painters who work on a large scale and with solid impasto.

The limitation of prices to three or four hundred pounds

would entirely prevent a married painter from devoting several years to one great work, and is therefore contrary to the interest of the most laborious pre-Raphaelite painters who bestow endless toil on single canvasses. Every painter ought to work as his disposition directs, and the prices of pictures ought to be so regulated as to allow him to do it. I, myself, would rather paint ten pictures, of which each should take me six months, and receive 500*l*. each for them, than one with tenfold labour for ten times the price. Still, I conceive that Hunt did right to follow his own genius, and received no more than a fair and just remuneration for his five years' labour. Nature will not allow a landscape-painter to watch one of her effects more than five minutes, and most landscape-painters *catch* her love of change, and the best of them cannot endure to work on one picture more than a month or two. The reason for this is, that with them other impressions are continually pressing for realization. At this hour I have in my mind, and could write a catalogue of, a hundred subjects for pictures, all which I feel eager to realize. If I gave twelve months to each picture, I should have to live a century, in good working condition, to accomplish such a task ; but as I work at present, it is likely that I may manage that, and more. Mr. Hunt is quite differently constituted, and his art is, as all art ought to be, exactly after the artist's nature. Now, all painters who feel like Hunt ought to be at liberty to work in his way if they choose, and they cannot do this without receiving very high prices for their works.

NOTE.

After the above chapter was finished I read a few passages from it to a lady for whose opinion on such matters I have a great respect, and she pointed out to me that if people were to act upon my doctrine that no two pictures should ever be hung one above another, pictures must cease to be useful as furniture, *because the upper parts of rooms would look quite bare and naked*. I suspect that she cares more for the general appearance of her rooms than for the art in her pictures ; but I happily suggested an idea which reconciled us. I said that it was a great mistake in picture buyers to be so fond of many little pictures rather than few large ones. All ordinary English drawing-rooms would afford convenient hanging for at least two large pictures ; and these, considered as furniture only, would have a far better effect, and look incomparably nobler and grander than a score of little ones, even though the little ones were hung purely with a view to furnish the room. Timid purchasers, however, cannot so readily make up their minds to purchase large pictures, which seem costly, as little pictures, which *seem* cheap. Yet the real truth is, that a thousand pounds laid out in important works will go much farther than fifteen hundred in tiny cabinet toys. It is obvious that a canvass which is eight feet high to begin with, without including the frame, will furnish the upper part of an ordinary room, and yet be hung at such a height as will admit of its broader execution being quite easily visible ; whereas the minute details on a panel a foot square are sure to be lost if it is hung high enough for its frame to be effective as furniture. I do not at all despise the question of furniture, for it is a great æsthetic question ; but I say that if you want pictures to look well as furniture, you ought to have them of noble size, and not hang little pictures out of sight, that their frames may tell well as wall decoration.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RELATION BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHY AND PAINTING.

IN the course of the first volume, I promised to state, before concluding the work, whatever opinions I might be able to form on this question of the relation between photography and painting.

I may now venture to offer such results as I have been able to arrive at.

I feel, however, a little embarrassed at the outset by doubts as to the degree of information on these subjects which I may prudently presuppose on the part of the reader. I hesitate between writing in a manner intelligible only to persons already in possession of the most commonly known facts, concerning the two arts whose mutual relation I purpose to examine, and writing in another, and more elementary manner, which may better suit the general reader, but render this chapter intolerably tedious to an informed one.

It seems best to err on the side of clearness and prolixity. For it would be idle to expect, on the part of persons not actively occupied in these arts, a sufficient degree of information to make a technical essay intelligible to them. I have very good grounds for believing

that there are few persons, living in England (in proportion to the population), who really know what photography is ; and, probably, still fewer who are aware what compromises, and concessions, and subtle artifices, are necessary to the construction of anything like a good picture. I find the general impression about photography to be that it is as perfect as a reflection of the scene in a mirror, with the single deficiency of colour ; and the common notion of painting seems to be even less accurate than that, for it entirely ignores the most refined art of the artist, without which painting could only imitate what is imitable in nature, and never aspire to interpret what is beyond all human imitation.

And, therefore, I will first try to explain what photography is.

Photography is the blackening and decomposition of a salt by *some* of the solar rays.

"It is drawing by light," says some etymologist who has not yet forgotten his Greek.

Pardon me, it is *not* drawing by light, and the word photography is a misnomer. If a photograph were really drawn by the luminous rays, it would be far truer than it is. Mr. Hardwich has clearly distinguished between the luminous and actinic rays, or the rays which produce what we call light, and those which effect the chemical changes we foolishly call "photography." He says, in his "Photographic Chemistry" (Fourth Edition, p. 61), "The actinic and luminous rays are totally distinct from each other, and the word 'photography,' which signifies the process of taking pictures by *light*, is, in reality inaccurate." And, again (page 62), "In exempli-

fying further the importance of distinguishing between visual and actinic rays of light, we may observe, that, if the two were in all respects the same, photography must cease to exist as an art. It would be impossible to make use of the more sensitive chemical preparations, from the difficulties which would attend the previous preparation and subsequent development of the plates.. These operations are now conducted in what is termed a dark room ; but it is dark only in a *photographic* sense, being illuminated by means of yellow light, which, whilst it enables the operator easily to watch the progress of the work, produces no injurious effect upon the sensitive surfaces."

Photography having been ascertained to be the blackening and decomposition of a salt by some of the solar rays, the next question of importance is *how* these rays blacken it.

And here it is necessary to say a little about Nature's light.

Let one million represent the sun, the brightest thing we know, and the unit represent the blackness of night, the blackest black we know. If we take this as representative of Nature's scale of light and dark, the most extensive scale attainable on paper may be from a dark five hundred times *lighter* than Nature's dark, to a light a thousand times *darker* than Nature's light, or somewhere between the figures 500 and 1000.

So that to represent Nature's million degrees we have, let us say, about five hundred degrees.

Nature is very rich and Art very poor. Nature has a million to spend where Art has five hundred. What is

the most prudent thing for poor Art to do? There are two ways of imitating Nature. Art may spend side by side with Nature, degree for degree of light, coin for coin, till all her resources are exhausted, and then confess herself bankrupt. Or she may establish a scale of expenditure suited to her limited resources; and, abandoning all hope of rivalry with Nature, set herself to the humbler task of interpreting her.

And here is the first essential difference between photography and painting, a difference which, of itself, is sufficient to separate them for ever.

Poor Photography spends degree for degree with rich Nature, and, of course, is very soon exhausted: but poor Painting husbands her little resources, and spends a penny for light where Nature spends a pound.

All photographs, therefore, which attempt to copy Nature's effects of light lose themselves either in a vacuity of light or a vacuity of shade.

Here is another illustration, but not so good a one as the preceding, because it does not sufficiently set forth the enormous difference in scale between nature and the photograph.

Nature's power of light is like a great organ with all its vast range of octaves. The photograph's power of light is, in comparison, something like a voice, but a voice of extremely limited compass.

How is the voice to follow the organ in an exercise on the scales?

The voice will sing its own notes in the places where they occur, but must ignore all the rest.

This is exactly the way the photograph imitates nature.

And when Nature plays only in the middle of her scale, photography would follow her with much accuracy if it were not for that fact about the excited film being insensitive to yellow rays.

Now, what is painting?

It is an intellectual and emotional interpretation of nature by means of carefully balanced and cunningly subdivided hues. Its powers of *imitation* are extremely limited. However, the eye of the painter, instead of being insensible to everything that is yellow, is as sensitive to gold and orange as to blue, so that in this respect he may do truer work. And in his way of interpreting nature's light, he has opportunities of compromise and compensation which the unthinking photograph cannot have. So he gets more truths.

With a view to ascertain something of the relative power of light in nature and art, I have made a few simple experiments which the reader may easily repeat for his own satisfaction.*

People cannot see either pictures or photographs in

* This comparison of light in nature and in art contains nothing new, except the illustrations; for the question has been well stated already by Mr. Ruskin. His statement of the superiority of nature in power of light is so far from being exaggerated that it is considerably within the truth, though I dare say astonishing enough to most of his readers. All this has, of course, been known to artists for generations; at any rate since Claude's time, who, having tried to paint the sun, must have found out that it was brighter than white-lead. Nor is it probable that our modern artists any more than Claude owe their knowledge of these facts to Mr. Ruskin, whose works, I am really sorry to say, are very little read by painters. A few of them have read the first volume of "*Modern Painters*," but I have not yet met with one who had got through the second; and as this statement about light occurs in the *fourth*, it is as if it had never been published at all, so far as they are concerned.

full out-of-door sunshine. They see them best, and they see them habitually, in quiet, dull daylight without sunshine.

The sun in a picture is usually made of a little flake-white, mixed with Naples or other yellow.

The whitest flake-white is not so white as snow.

During the winter months I have obtained a great many memoranda of mountain snow. On looking over these memoranda I find that when not illuminated by direct sunshine the snow is in many instances considerably darker than the sky ; darker even than grey clouds.

And yet I know that the flake-white I have to imitate *snow in sunshine* with is, in reality, itself *darker than snow in shadow*.

Our whitest white is darker than many of Nature's ordinary blues and greens and reds.

And our blackest black is lighter than many of Nature's greys.

This last fact is easily ascertained. Hang a common black cloth dress coat on a stand out of doors any moonless night, so as to bring it against the sky. Throw the light of a lamp upon it, and you will find your black cloth coat, the blackest thing you have, a great deal lighter than a clear starlit sky.

And this experiment gives a result infinitely below the truth. A fairer way would be to cast some rays of electric light on the coat, because as everybody knows, who has walked in the streets at night, even gaslight is immeasurably below ordinary clouded daylight, such as we require for seeing pictures.

Well, but though the sky is darker than the coat,

there are some clouds visible which, in their turn, are considerably darker than the sky. And the mountain under the clouds is infinitely darker than they are. So here we are in Nature's bass notes ; and no art can get down there.

In all photographs which attempt landscape, and include distant and highly illuminated objects, such as mountains and the sky, the sensitive film of the negative has always been so entirely decomposed by Nature's middle degrees of light as to leave no room for farther decomposition by the highest, or else the time of exposure has been insufficient for the due action of Nature's lower degrees of light, so that they have not been able to make any impression.

The consequence of this in the *positive*, with which the public is most familiar, is that all Nature's higher notes are lost in white vacancy, or else all her lower notes in black or brown vacancy.

Thus, in a photograph of the sea ; because the sea is a bright object ; if we want to have the glitter of the wave we must expose our negative so very short a time that any solid objects on the shore will take no effect upon it, and be left blank.

In the positive, these blank objects will, of course, print as brown silhouettes.

We will now examine a few photographs by the ablest hands to see whether this is so. And then we will examine one or two pictures and engravings to see in what manner intellectual art contends with this great difficulty, and how far the human intellect has found means to overcome it.

I have at hand a portfolio of good photographs by professional photographers, and a portfolio of photographs, not so good, done by myself. These will afford ample materials for our investigation.

One of the best photographs of the sea, which I have been able to procure in Paris, is a view of sea and sky, with a pier and lighthouse at the spectator's right. It is by E. Colliau, and is entitled "*La Jetée.*" The negative has been exposed a very short time indeed, in order to preserve the light on the clouds, and the glitter of the sunshine on the water. These two truths are accordingly obtained, the silvery touches of soft light on the clouds are all admirably rendered, and the glitter of the ripple is accurately recorded too. But the grey shade of the clouds is given in deep brown, and, although the sun is high, the lighthouse, the pier, and the people upon it *are all in silhouette, without the faintest trace of any detail whatever.* Of course, if M. Colliau had exposed his wet collodion negative a few seconds more, he would have obtained the detail in the pier at the cost of his sky, which would have been all decomposed away by the powerful action of the abundant chemical rays, and his negative on development would have exhibited a black sky over a very dark sea, which in the positive would have given us a white sky and pale water, without glitter. But we should have had our pier in the corner quite perfect, and should have been able to see the people upon it distinctly.

A prudent photographer will always, where possible, avoid these discrepancies. The pier was introduced to add a little human interest to the subject, and in this

respect with judgment, for one cannot help sympathising with the people on the pier, who are waiting for their friends. But in photography, the great compass of Nature's light should never be attempted, for it can never be even suggestively rendered. And M. Colliau has succeeded in producing better sea-views, where there was nothing in the foreground darker than the sea itself, as, for example, in that one entitled "*Le mauvais temps*," one of the most valuable memoranda of the action of sea-waves I possess, and for which I feel extremely grateful. The peculiar *leaping* of sea-water is perfectly given, and the white crests in the middle distance are as good as may be. This photograph fails towards the edges, where it becomes dark—a common defect in sea-views, on account of their very brief exposure, which M. Colliau has wisely remedied in some others of his by having the positives cut into ovals before being mounted. With the exception of this defect, this photograph is all that one can desire; the light in the natural subject, though excessively high in pitch, being very limited in compass. For the *pitch* matters nothing whatever to the photograph, as that can always be transposed to Photography's own key by an exposure more or less prolonged; but the *compass* is of the greatest importance, because Photography has so narrow a compass, that when the natural subject includes both treble and bass notes, she must pass two-thirds of them in absolute silence.

I have an oval photograph of sea by M. Colliau, with a boat in the middle distance. The time of exposure must have been very brief, for the forms of the waves are quite firm and clear, yet there is nothing black but

the hull of the boat. If there had been anything solid in the foreground ; as, for instance, a pier ; it would have come in silhouette, and spoiled the photograph.

I have another oval of rough sea, by the same manipulator. It includes a fine cumulus cloud, and is altogether wonderful. Where it fails as a study is in the absence of distinction between *foam* and *reflection*. The negative has evidently been exposed long enough for the *foam* to act upon it ; so that it is as bright as the glitter, and there is no separating them. A little more exposure, and the middle tints would have blackened the negative all over the surface of the water in the interstices between the spots of foam and glitter. Once this done, the picture would have been destroyed altogether ; for the sea would have been one black blank in the negative, and one white blank in the positive.

And now, if you want to know the relation between these marine photographs and a good picture of sea, it is easy to ascertain it. We have only to compare one of the best specimens of marine photography we can find, with one of the best pictures of sea hitherto produced by our realist school.

I will take for this purpose one of Gustave le Gray's marine photographs, and Holman Hunt's exquisite little picture entitled "Fairlight Downs. Sunlight on the Sea."

In the photograph the blaze of light upon the sea is given with perfect fidelity ; but in order to get this, and the light on the edges of the clouds, all else has been sacrificed—the shaded sides of the clouds, in nature of a dazzling grey, brighter than white paper, are positively black in the photograph, and the pale splendour of the

sunlit sea—except where it *flashes* light—is heavy and impenetrable darkness. Towards the sides of the photograph, the distinction between sea and sky is wholly lost in one uniform shade of dark brown, extending from top to bottom, without any indication of a horizon ; so that, if you were to cut a strip an inch and a half broad from each side of the photograph, no one on looking at the strip would at all suspect that it represented either sea or sky, or anything else in nature. The crowning falsity is, however, the sun itself, which is *darker* than the surrounding clouds, being simply a grey wafer on a white ground.

However, since it is one of the peculiar misfortunes of the photograph that it is not capable of giving two truths at once, not having any method of compensation like that which every painter finds out for himself, we must be satisfied in all photographs of sunlight on the sea with this one truth only—the glitter on the ripple—and not ask for any more. I have observed that simple people always take such photographs for moonlights, and I suspect that they are extensively sold as such. The truth is that they *do* approach nearer to the character of moonshine than sunshine ; but even in moonlit water there is a *diffused* light outside the reflection or glitter, which is lost in these photographs.

It is agreeable to turn from this representation of one truth to a picture which, in about the same superficies, gives us a thousand.

At Mr. Gambart's Winter Exhibition in the year 1858, the reader may have seen a wonderful little picture by Holman Hunt, entitled "Fairlight Downs. Sunlight on

the Sea." The sunlight itself in its broad white glare on the water under the sun, and its gradual scattering into glitter to the right hand and to the left ; in its long lines in the distance, divided by the shadows of the clouds ; in its restless flashing on the crests of the little waves far away, is as true and truer than the photograph—but here all comparison ends, because there is no longer in the photograph anything to be compared with the picture. Where the photograph is simply dark brown, the picture is full of the most marvellously delicate gradations, and the sweetest play of hue. Where the glitter is not, we have still the sunlit beauty of the fair sea, which is indeed better and more precious even than the glitter itself, just as the fairness of a beautiful woman is better than the glitter of her diamonds. And there is a hot haze in the blinding distance miles away, and there is a sultriness in the accumulated clouds which shall light up that sea at night with another and more terrible splendour. And then there is the green of the rich land, and the purple of the fallow, and nearer is a mingled glow of scarlet flowers and green leaves, and staring sheep, and a dog, and the shepherd's staff. And all these other facts Hunt could get into his picture because painting is a great intellectual art ; an art of compensation, and compromise, and contrast ; an art capable of moderation, and subject to mastery. And all these other facts Gustave le Gray could *not* get into his photograph, because photography is not a fine art, but an art-science ; narrow in range, emphatic in assertion, telling one truth for ten falsehoods, but telling always distinctly the one truth that it is able to perceive.

On comparing photographs with good topographical pen-drawings of the same objects, I find a result very different from anything that many persons would expect. I find the *sum* of detail, in subjects including both distant and near objects, to be much greater in the drawing than in the photograph. Thus, Bisson's Chillon, a magnificent photograph, gives the castle in true detail, but loses the near foliage in black, and the mountain detail in pale brown, like the sky. A good topographical drawing would have given the castle less exquisitely, but we should have had the near foliage thoroughly drawn, and the mountain forms defined. I have before me a good positive of the Lac de Gaube, evidently printed from a waxed paper negative, and therefore a remarkable degree of detail is not to be expected; still, I think, few people not accustomed to analyse photographs would be prepared, in a photograph of clear weather, such as this one evidently is, to find such a large space of sheer vacancy as the mountain-slope on the left. A topographical drawing might be done in a week which would contain ten times as many facts as this photograph.

I once took a waxed paper negative of Craiganunie, and have since drawn and painted the same subject in various ways; I find that with five or six hours' labour, I can get a memorandum containing much more detail than the photograph. I do not pretend to say that the details in the drawing are so accurately or delicately done; but they are quite accurate enough for artistic purposes, and there are *more of them* than in the photograph.

I know that the collodion process would have afforded

me more abundant detail ; but, to an artist, this additional detail is often of little consequence, being not *the* detail he wants. For the best photograph of any extensive scene never gives more than *partial* detail, however perfect as far as it goes. The artist, too, gives selected detail, that which seems to him the most needful and vitally expressive : and here, ten to one, if he is a good artist, he and the photograph will not be of the same opinion.

It is, therefore, quite impossible to produce good pictures by copying photographs. And this is the reason why Mr. Ruskin, in answer to a malicious accusation against the pre-Raphaelites, that they "copied photographs," challenged the accusers to produce a pre-Raphaelite picture themselves, or anything like one, by that process. The challenge was perfectly safe, and, of course, has never been responded to.

It is, however, true, that almost all living artists buy photographs. I make no mystery of the fact that I have a choice little collection myself, which I hope to increase gradually to a much greater extent. When I visit the studios of my brother artists, I often find photographs in their portfolios, or on their easels, and am glad to find them there. They indicate less a spirit of indolence than of awakened observation. They prove, too, that the foolish jealousy with which photography on its first appearance was so commonly regarded by painters is fast yielding to an intelligent appreciation of the peculiar services it is destined to render to our art.

The way in which artists ordinarily use photographs is this. When their memoranda from nature are not minute

enough, as sometimes from circumstances they cannot be, painters will take a suggestion from a photograph, and *invent* details for their pictures, which the photograph rather suggests than contains. This is the practice of some artists I know ; but I have been told, on good authority, that one of our most popular painters of winter scenery always works from the photograph alone, and never even draws from nature. The study of winter scenery from nature involves, of course, the physical difficulty of resistance to the cold ; and it seems natural that a painter who does not use a studio-tent like mine should find painting from photographs in a warm studio pleasanter work than painting from nature in the cold open air of December. Even in this extreme instance, however, the true way of stating the case would be to say that the artist works from memory and invention aided by reference to photographs, because there is a good deal of colour in his works, which could not be got from photographs ; *and his system of light is artistic and not photographic, a little fact which, of itself, at once precludes all idea of copying photographs.*

Since most artists buy photographs of subjects not often obviously connected with the particular subjects of their pictures, the question naturally suggests itself, whether it would not be desirable for the painter to take photographs himself, which might afford more direct and useful data than any procurable in the shops, as he might then obtain memoranda of the particular subjects he intended to paint. Such a course appears at first sight likely to be peculiarly advantageous to a painter, for the important reason that he might adjust the time

of exposure of the negative to the especial result required ; and so, by taking several photographs of the same subject, of different degrees of exposure, obtain from their united testimony the various truths of detail he would need for his picture. This suggests itself as a wise and politic course to pursue, for it apparently obviates the greatest inconvenience of photography, its loss of detail at the two ends of the scale. By a careful regulation of the exposure, half a dozen collodion negatives of one scene might be made to yield an enormous aggregate of detail in every part of the subject.

It seems also evident that since the wet collodion process is almost instantaneous, certain memoranda of effects of light may be got by its means which are not otherwise attainable ; as, for example, the complicated shadows of mountains, which it is quite impossible to draw truly on account of their swift changing. And, to a painter who has to deal with rich architecture, it seems as if the photograph would be a most useful servant, giving him accurate data for every stone in the most elaborately wrought building.* There can be no doubt that no memorandum of cloud-form is equal to a photograph, for none other can be true, even in outline ; whereas, the sensitive collodion will arrest in an instant the flying change of innumerable clouds. And, in matters of foreground detail, when a painter cannot remain on the spot to finish an elaborate drawing from nature ; as, for example, on a Swiss glacier, the abundant detail obtainable by a collodion photograph in a few seconds, will

* I speak of exteriors only. Gothic interiors are generally too dark to be photographed in detail.

naturally tempt a landscape-painter to encumber himself with a camera.

For this photography, as an art so imperfect, is a wonderfully obedient slave for the collecting of memoranda, if only its one great peculiarity be humoured a little. Photography cannot often give very much truth at once ; but it will give us innumerable truths, if we only ask for one at a time. And a large collection of photographic memoranda, taken by a painter for especial purposes, seems likely to be a precious possession for him.

But here occur other considerations.

Photography affords a very interesting proof of a fact well known to artists, that a certain degree of exaggeration is quite indispensable to apparent veracity. I believe that this is so in literature also ; and that no study of human character would ever be generally recognised as true which was not idealised and exaggerated almost to the verge of caricature. A certain extravagance of statement seems in literature essential to effective work ; owing, I suppose, to the coarseness of our faculties, which need something stronger than pure truth, as the ordinary British consumer will only drink doctored wines, and despises the genuine juice of the grape. But, however this may be in books, it is quite demonstrably so in pictures, as the photograph conclusively proves. Photographs of mountains are hardly recognisable. The most careful topographic drawing, if it looks like nature, is sure to be full of exaggerations. People who are not aware of this never can recognise photographs of distant scenery, however familiar the scenery may be to them ; but they will recognise an exaggerated sketch without

difficulty. I have found this continually here. I do my best not to exaggerate in working from nature ; but, as soon as ever I get interested in my subject, I cannot help exaggerating ; whereas the photographic machine, being absolutely indifferent, will not give the least additional emphasis to the most interesting feature in its subject. The grandeur of noble scenery excites the imagination. It is quite incredible how small a space is really occupied, in the picture on the retina of the eye, by that far gorge between the hills that we *know* to be a thousand feet deep, and five miles through. The photograph gives the fact in its stern truth, so many actinic rays and no more, an image so large in proportion and no larger. But the painter always sympathises, more or less, with the excitement of the beholder, for he is himself a beholder. And, therefore, the photographic truth about mountains will always, in its lifelessness, strongly offend the artistic sense, and seem false and inadequate, as, indeed, it is, in relation to the spectator's imagination.

But *all* good painting, however literal, however pre-Raphaelite or topographic, is full of human feeling and emotion. If it has no other feeling in it than love or admiration for the place depicted, that is much already, quite enough to carry the picture out of the range of photography into the regions of real art.

And this is the reason why a good painting cannot be based on a photograph. I find photographic memoranda of less value even than hasty sketches, though no painter was ever more dissatisfied with mere sketching. The photograph renders forms truly, no doubt, as far as it goes, but it by no means renders feelings, and is therefore

of no practical use* to a painter, who feels habitually, and never works without emotion. And it is useless to try to eliminate feeling from our art even in plain portraiture. It is possible to draw portraits of mountains as grandly as Titian and Vandyke drew portraits of men; and, mark you, when a painter proposes to himself the portraiture of particular scenes instead of the ideal landscape-painting of the painter-poets, he no more abandons the life of a thinking and feeling creature than an author who takes to writing history instead of fiction. A true painter both thinks and feels, and that always, but most intensely when in the actual presence of Nature. The photographic machine feels nothing, and there is precisely the same difference between its work and the soul's work in landscape-portraiture that there is in figure-portraiture. A topographic landscape-painter may put as much tenderness and grace into his trees and clouds as Reynolds into his women, without at all quitting the very elastic limitations of portraiture.

I have found this utter insensibility of the photograph positively irritating when I have occasionally used it to obtain memoranda of my favourite scenes. It may be demonstrably, mathematically, scientifically true that the mountains round Loch Awe are reduced by perspective to very unimportant elevations in a narrow black line of land that serves to divide the sky from the water; but it is no use telling me so, because either my eyes, or my imagination, or some unaccountable prepossession in my unreasoning instincts will have it they are quite otherwise. And the photographs seem to me unendurably

* Except, of course, for *reference* as to matters of fact.

inadequate and false, my own drawings only seeming tolerably true, though not so true as I would have them. The fact is, there is a glamour on all our eyes. Queen Nature has dazzled and bewitched us by her overpowering splendour and loveliness.

This power of the excited imagination to change the actual forms and relative magnitudes of objects I have repeatedly tested, with results that are quite astonishing. The best test, for a person who can draw, is to sketch some real scene exactly as it appears to him when excited by its beauty, not, of course, in forced coldness or real apathy. Let him afterwards photograph the same subject. On comparing the sketch with the photograph, he will understand the degree in which the fire of imagination affects the forms of things. And what is still more astonishing at first is, that he cannot believe that the photograph is true at all, it seems as if there were something altogether wrong about it. But if he sets up a threaded frame and deliberately *measures* the mountains by the reticulations of the crossed threads, and then coldly copies them on a sheet of paper ruled with lines answering to the threads, he will prove the literal accuracy of the photograph. There is another way to prove it. Let the painter look at the same scene by starlight. In the daylight his imagination is excited by the mountains, and they seem to occupy the whole plane of vision, but at night it is not so; *then the stars tyrannise over the imagination, and the mountains all shrink into a narrow, black, irregular line, tamed into absolute insignificance, and precisely like the brown stain that represents them in the photograph.* So that a photograph of a range of moun-

tains may be a good and serviceable memorandum for a night picture, when they do not affect the imagination much on account of their own vacancy, and the stronger influence of the stars, and yet quite inadequate for any powerful daylight effect when the mountains themselves are mighty.

What we artists see is a vision of Nature through the lenses that *she* has given us, our own human eyes, brightened or dimmed as may be with human joys and sorrows and emotions. That vision thus transmitted is reflected in the mysterious dark chamber of the skull, with a thousand subtle changes and strange variations of unaccountable fantasy. And it seems to me that although the scene is God's work and sacred, the lens also, and the dark chamber, are not less God's work, nor less sacred. Men's eyes were not given them to be superseded by carefully ground glass lenses of the best London manufacture. The glass lens is a wonderful thing no doubt, very difficult to shape and polish to its true surface curves, and the mahogany box is a very accurate and well-made specimen of joiner's work; but what of the lens that is in the eye, and the box that holds the brain? The artist who would truly *see* Nature must look at her works with the eyes that she has given him, and not see her at second-hand by the intervention of a glass lens and a mahogany camera.

Unspeakably important to every student—and the artist is *always* a student—is the great question of culture. I hold culture so precious that hardly any sacrifice is to be refused that may tend to its attainment, nor any advantage accepted which impedes the pursuit of it.

And artists ought to remember that, as in most things, a definite price has to be paid for any assistance photography can give, and that this price must be paid in the precise form most fatal to ultimate success. I do not speak of expensive chemicals, of nitrate of silver, and chloride of gold, I speak of what is incomparably more precious than either silver or gold, the knowledge of nature. Every piece of hard study a painter does from nature, however worthless in itself, has compelled him to observe natural facts which the photograph does not recognise, and cannot render ; and every time a painter *substitutes* photography for nature, as a source of instruction, he misses many truths, inures himself to many falsities, and pays for the convenience of having the photograph in the next print-shop instead of travelling to see nature, in something more ruinous than coin—he pays for it with part of his own faculties. Indolence, in whatever shape, lays this terrible tax upon us, that it will be paid for *out of ourselves*. For every hour's work that we avoid through indolence is so much strength lost to us ; and though there is a help which benefits us, there is another kind of help which only debilitates us. Now, photography will help a painter in either of these ways, according to his own choice. If he refers to it quite independently and intelligently for the mere refreshment of his memory, it will really be of great use to him, and do him no manner of harm ; but if he puts his trust in it when he ought to trust nature alone, if he blindly relies upon it to save himself the trouble of working and learning from nature, it will put poison and death into all his best and noblest faculties.

If an artist takes photographic memoranda for himself, what process ought he to employ ?

A great many processes have been employed by different photographers since the days of Niepce, but of these, three only concern us, the wet collodion, the waxed paper, and the dry collodion.

The wet collodion is scarcely eligible for an artist's own practice on account of its well-known uncertainty, and the cumbersome apparatus it requires ; and because it is necessary to excite the film immediately before exposure, and to develop the image, and fix it, immediately after, so that it always consumes a great deal of *daylight* time, far more than anybody would think who only considered the few seconds or minutes of actual exposure. There are circumstances, however, where it is worth while to employ the wet collodion.

When a painter is collecting memoranda for a *large* picture—a picture of sufficient value and importance to make it worth his while to take a great deal of trouble in obtaining records of every fact in the scene which may be of use to his great work—it will repay him to set up on the spot a complete photographic and artistic camp, in which one tent or hut would be exclusively devoted to the photographic department. With such preparations, but not conveniently without them, it is possible to pursue the wet collodion process ; and about a dozen negatives of different degrees of exposure, *which exposure is not to be regulated according to photographer's rules, but according to the painter's wants*, would afford the artist a mine of facts for reference.

For travelling and sketching artists, on the other hand,

who do not collect memoranda for some especial work ; but merely to enrich their collections at home, the wet collodion process is altogether unsuitable. When you work in wet collodion, you must be content to sacrifice a whole day to it at once. Now, travelling artists seldom give more than two days to one place, and they could not sacrifice one of them to photography. Such artists, if they employ photography at all, require some process which will allow of the separation of the different operations, so that the exposure alone shall occupy daylight-time, whilst the preparation and development may be done by candlelight at home, on the preceding and subsequent evenings.

The waxed-paper process offers this advantage. After doing a good day's work in drawing from nature, a painter may prepare his sheets of waxed paper, and render them sensitive ; then put them by in a portfolio, and the next day get a few photographic memoranda by exposing his papers in the camera in the intervals of work. He merely transfers the exposed papers to another portfolio, without troubling himself about development, which he does afterwards at home in the evening. All this sounds wonderfully convenient ; but as I have practically tried it with much perseverance, I may be allowed to indicate a few drawbacks.

The paper process is objectionable for several reasons. 1st. The sheets do not retain their full degree of sensibility long enough to be very convenient ; for I have found in practice that more than one half of them were lost on account of the weather, which did not always allow of their being used whilst still serviceable.

2d. The time of exposure is so long as to make the process useless for what is transitory in nature ; so that it is impossible to obtain a good paper negative, even of foliage, except in the very calmest weather, when the leaves will remain quiet for twenty minutes or half an hour together. This length of exposure, too, makes the process costly in point of time. 3d. The negative, when obtained, is seldom sufficiently minute in detail to be of more use than a careful drawing. 4th. The idea that the development costs no daylight time merely because it is done in the night is fallacious. I used to find it impossible to do any good early on a summer's morning, after having been kept out of bed the greater part of the night to watch the slow development of a series of negatives. In camp, this interruption to the night's repose is intolerable. After working hard all day, an unbroken sleep is necessary to the success of the morrow's labour, and the candle-light time of the night will be paid for in the day-light time of the morning—it could not be paid for more dearly.

The dry collodion remains. This process is now generally adopted for landscape, on account of advantages similar to those possessed by the waxed paper, and two important advantages which the waxed paper does *not* possess. A glass plate, with a film of dry collodion upon it, will keep fit for use during a very long time—for twelve months, certainly—without any appreciable diminution of sensitiveness. It will also afford great delicacy of detail.

I have not yet practised this process myself, and am, consequently, not qualified to speak from experience, as

I did with regard to the two preceding processes ; but it seems to me the most eligible one for a painter, because it admits of a complete division of labour, by which all the chemical work may be allotted to a practical chemist, and the choice of subject and exposure of the plate alone reserved for the artist. By this system I could have plates sent here from London, already sensitive and fit for exposure, at any time during twelve months. After having exposed them, I could return them to London and have them developed in the laboratory, where they were rendered sensitive. Thence they would be forwarded to a printer of positives, who would print me a positive or two from each plate ; so that by this perfect division of labour, the only time I should have to expend would be the five minutes of exposure ; and the only apparatus I need ever burden myself with would be a folding camera and a box of sensitive plates.

Well, this is, no doubt, exactly the thing. But there is one little objection. This beautiful division of labour, which washes the artist's hands of all blackening nitrates and fixing hyposulphites, and which economises so well his valuable time, weighs as heavily on his purse as the waxed-paper process on his constitution ; for as in the one case he may have to watch till three o'clock in the morning, in the other it will be necessary to face with equanimity bills of a portentous length. If you follow the dry collodion process in this way—and I really cannot counsel any painter to take the chemical operations of photography into his own hands—you will find that every good photograph, if large enough to be of any use, will cost you *gold*.

Whatever photographic process an artist may pursue, I hold it, however, quite a settled question that he ought never to print his own positives. There are plenty of positive printers in London who will do it for him on reasonable terms, and so relieve him of an unnecessary burden of labour.

I have now for some time ceased to occupy myself practically with photography ; it is too uncertain in this wretched climate ; but when I leave here for France, I fully intend to resume it, only in a different manner. I shall engage for a few weeks at a time some clever professional photographer as my assistant, and I shall do nothing more than point out to him what I want, and superintend his operations, to see that he exposes his negatives and prints his positives so as to be of most use to me ; not to make pretty saleable photographs of them. Whilst he is busy with his chemicals, of which literally and metaphorically I have washed my hands for ever, I shall be busy with colour, and between us we shall get memoranda copious enough to afford me all the data I want.

An ardent photographer would say that I had been easily discouraged ; that I might have obtained better negatives even by the waxed-paper process than I succeeded in doing, if I had only persevered ; that the wet collodion, if I had practised it, instead of only just learning it and leaving it, might have produced results as wonderful in my hands as it has done in the hands of others—and much more to the same effect. Granted ; but perseverance is not *always* prudence. I hold that perseverance in one's own calling or pursuit is wisdom, if

the pursuit were wisely chosen at the first ; but that perseverance in pursuits foreign to one's own, or only distantly related thereto, may very soon become great folly. And it is obvious to any one who will consider the nature of any photographic process, that there is nothing in any such process having the slightest analogy with the processes employed by painters in the production of pictures. The habitual examination of negatives gives, it is true, a certain critical keenness of sight ; but this is quite independent of the study of nature ; and it is possible to judge of the due exposure of a negative without possessing any knowledge of what painters understand by the word "nature." The manipulations of the two arts have nothing in common. We cannot here, as in the case of pencil and pen drawing, or engraving, advance practically in some part of the art of painting, whilst engaged in doing something else. It requires considerable manual skill to spread successfully a film of collodion on a glass plate ; but this skill will avail us nothing when we come to spread a film of graduated oil-colour on canvass. And, therefore, I hold that for a painter to devote any great amount of perseverance to a photographic process, would, in *him*, be imprudent, especially seeing that what photographers call bad photographs, are often just as useful to a painter as the very best. The chemical knowledge and mechanical dexterity required for the successful practice of either the waxed paper or wet collodion process, are both so considerable, that the perseverance of *years* is necessary to their perfect acquisition. And these years I can employ better in my own art. It is for these reasons, that, in

spite of its costliness, the dry collodion is the best process for a painter who wishes to call in the assistance of photography, because it reduces to a minimum the demands on his scientific acquirements and manual dexterity.

Since few artists are likely to practise photography for themselves, it is as an independent art that it is likely to influence ours. Let us see how far that influence is likely to extend.

I concede the title of "art" to photography, but not in its highest sense. The photographer is so hampered by conditions that he cannot be an artist in the true sense, because he does not enjoy the least intellectual freedom. He is rather the slave of the camera than its master ; and though great skill and science are needed to serve the camera well, the *soul* of the photographer has nothing to do with the result ; and makes no farther communication to the spectator than this simple one, " I, such an one, chose this subject."

I have said already how much I rejoice in the passing away of the old jealousy with which photography used to be regarded by painters. And the better its peculiar powers are understood and applied, the less chance will there be that these feelings of jealousy can ever possess any but the most ignorant and incapable artists. For my own part, though knowing as a painter only can know, how far the photograph falls short of that absolute natural truth which thoughtless people are so ready to attribute to it, I hold the science precious in a thousand ways. It would take a whole volume to recount the services which photography has already rendered to the world, and another to foretell some of its most obvious

future benefits; but, as I am concerned here only with its relation to the art of painting, I shall endeavour to point out one or two of the principal reasons why we artists ought to be truly grateful to the illustrious men who discovered it, and to those scarcely less illustrious labourers who have brought it to its present marvellous state of perfection.

First of all, photography has relieved painters of nearly all the soulless drudgery they used to have to go through formerly, and so has wonderfully elevated them as artists by *defining the true sphere of their work*. For the question which photography is making everybody ask, "What is the good of painting?" is precisely the question which everybody in England *must* ask, and get answered satisfactorily, before there is any chance of our art taking its due place amongst the occupations of men. When I show my photographs to people who do not care for art, I observe that they often ask this question—a question which I, on my part, find it very difficult to answer in a manner, and within limits which must be polite and not didactic. How shall I answer it here? How shall the only true answer to it ever be given in one sentence, or page, or chapter, or volume? For to answer this question rightly would be to explain *the whole art of painting*, a matter of some magnitude, and one not easily set forth in words, however well arranged.

Here is an abstract of the answer, however, not likely to be very satisfactory, I fear, to the people who usually ask the question, yet the best I can find just now.

The good of painting is that it represents the *relations*

of truths of nature (1st) to each other, and (2d) to the heart and intellect of man.

Photography represents facts isolated from their natural companions, and without any hint of their relation to the human mind.

Now it is only the *unity of relation* that can satisfy the artistic sense, not isolated fragments; and, therefore, so long as the artistic sense remains in the human organization, the demand for pictures will certainly continue.

I wish I could make perfectly clear what is that *unity of relation* which is so satisfactory to the artistic sense; but that, in these limits, is impossible. It is enough to say here that any perfect "whole" in a pictorial representation of nature must include delicate colours and beautiful forms, *all helping each other to the utmost*, like a chorus of well-trained singers, and that in the arrangement of it all a great human soul must manifest itself, just as the soul of Handel does in a chorus from the Messiah.

But in the photograph we have only a fact or two clearly stated, but not in their natural connexion with other facts; far less in their deeper and more mysterious connexion, which the genius of great imaginative artists is alone able to apprehend.

Therefore the division of labour likely to take place between photography and painting is this. Photography will record *isolated facts*, of which an infinite number always need recording. Painting will concern itself with the *relations* of associated truths and beauties.

And let each keep to its own task. The photograph can never successfully encroach on the province of paint-

ing ; and henceforth let us hope that painters will never again commit the rash imprudence of attempting to intrude upon the peculiar domain of the photograph.

In the few instances where photographers have attempted to produce something resembling historical pictures, by arranging models and furniture, and photographing the *tableaux vivants* so obtained, the effect produced on the spectator was always the simple fact that he was looking at a photograph of dressed-up models and carefully arranged furniture—anything farther from a true picture it would be impossible to conceive. The *naïveté* of the mistake on which this spurious art was founded is really amusing. The photographers fancied that the painters merely copied their models, and so thought it easy to rival them. Why, even the very severest and most rigid pre-Raphaelites use the model as little more than a stimulus, an authority, or a suggestion. Copy the model indeed ! I should like to know where on earth Hunt could have found a woman capable of assuming and retaining that marvellous expression of beatitude that illuminates the sweet face of Mary when she finds Jesus in the Temple. That expression, which is the most mighty thing in the whole picture—the mightiest, I mean, over the hearts of all men and women who can really feel anything—was gotten out of the painter's own soul, not from any hired model whatever. And the other intense expression of maternal love in the "Rescue," by Millais, whence came it ? From the model, think you, or from the mind of the painter ? And not only expression, but even the subtle play of delicate line in the works of the great designers,—even

that is not copyism, nor to be got at by copyism such as the camera may rival.

I need not do more than refer in this place to the odious vulgarity of the common stereoscopic scenes of domestic life : the weddings and christenings, where a sham clergyman in a pasteboard church unites a neatly shaven model husband to a modest model wife ; or a miserable infant, which at the tender age of three months has commenced its professional career as a model, is held for the hundredth time at a sham font to be christened by the same dreary sham clergyman who officiated at the sham wedding. We will leave these abominations to prosper in peace, which, being intensely vulgar, they are very sure to do, under the patronage of a discriminating public.

And, on the other hand, what a lamentable waste of labour it is when artists forget all about the mutual relation of things, to copy unmeaning details in long months of labour, which any good photographer would obtain in infinitely greater perfection with an exposure of as many minutes ! The mere fact that photography does this sort of work so unapproachably well, should be enough of itself to warn our young painters from engaging in it. Anybody who wants a plain fact about a piece of cliff or castle-wall can get it in a photograph for a few shillings : then why should he spend pounds for a picture which will give him nothing more ? But the relation of the castle or the cliff to the heaven above or the water beneath, and to the minds of men—the significant stains of colour upon it, the grandeur of its enduring strength, the deep human feelings that it

ought to kindle in the spectator's heart—these things are the exclusive domain of the painter, and he should never sacrifice the least of these to mere literal fidelity of detail.

Some attempts have been made lately by our most observant and laborious young painters to *mirror* nature with absolute accuracy. I have tried for this myself, and tried hard too ; but on comparing carefully the results I obtained with those given by the photograph, I felt that our two paths lay in quite different directions. What I honestly meant for simple topographic painting, and believed to be such, I discovered on comparing it with photographs of the same subjects to be anything but literally accurate, *though it seemed to me, and to everybody else, much more like the scene than the photograph.* But all really accurate mirror-painting would, in outline at least, exactly coincide with photography. And I see some reason to doubt whether it was ever intended that men should devote their lives to this work of the mirror, since Nature has given us this wonderful science of photography, as it seems expressly for this very purpose.

The service rendered by the stereoscope in the recording of facts is much greater than people are ordinarily aware of. In all photographs except stereoscopic ones, there is a certain *unnatural* confusion in their flatness, an uncertainty as to whether one detail is nearer to the spectator than another. This uncertainty painters avoid by wilful exaggeration of relief, and other artifices ; but the stereoscope removes it altogether, by making us see two distinct images of the same object at once from

different points of view, exactly as we do in looking at Nature from the two different windows of our two eyes ; the consequence of which is, that we grasp the details by the two sides and detach them from the general confusion of mere flat one-eyed vision, such as the ordinary photograph gives us. The stereoscope renders then a very peculiar and valuable service to photography, by making it infinitely more *legible* as a record of fact ; and I do not believe that a painted record of any mere fact of form, however delicately done, can ever equal a shilling stereoscopic slide. I am not speaking here of colour, because colour is so changeable as not to be very desirable in plain mirror-like copyism of facts. We are not now speaking of beauty nor of feeling, two things belonging almost exclusively to fine art : we are speaking of the authentic recording of facts of permanent interest ; and I mean to say, *not* that colour is not precious—for no painter could think that—but that, as a fact of permanent interest, perfect accuracy in the masonry of a building may be of more consequence than the colour of its mosses.

Now, as a record of plain ordinary matters of fact, the photograph is perfectly reliable, and all *good* painting is unreliable. You cannot, for instance, when looking at the most laboured picture on the walls of the Academy, be quite sure that, if you count the stones in a castle-wall, you will ascertain the number of real stones in the real castle-wall ; on the contrary, you may be quite sure that no such degree of accuracy is to be got from any painter. But a photograph would have given you the fact quite precisely. And in this quality of perfect

reliableness for plain every-day facts lies the peculiar value of the photographic art. It cannot give us one picture, but it will give us millions of most reliable memoranda containing an infinite amount of useful information. It cannot give the most precious truths of nature, but there is no testimony so trustworthy for large classes of ordinary facts, such as all the world wants.

The discovery of photography was contemporaneous with the immense increase of a certain want which it perfectly supplied. A kind of art was wanted which should record simple facts, and do it cheaply. A poor soldier's wife can now get a more authentic miniature of her husband for one shilling, than a rich lady could have procured a century ago for a hundred pounds. An emigrant in Australia can have a picture of his father's house, with every well-known and beloved detail, for less money than a common artist would charge for a bad pencil sketch. An architectural student can buy reliable records of every building of any consequence in Europe for a few shillings each, any one of which is of more value to him than a whole library of engravings. A mechanic may get for the price of an evening's carouse at the ale-house a portrait of his favourite engine on the nearest railway, done in a few seconds, on a bit of glass varnished with collodion, and that so marvellously, that the most exquisite Dutch picture is as coarse as a Haydon in comparison ; and so strict and rigid in its accuracy of hard, exact, mechanical detail, that the best draughtsman in England might have toiled for months without approaching its microscopic fidelity. A landed pro-

prietor living at a distance from his estate may easily inform himself of the condition of his farm-buildings, and of the progress of external repairs and alterations, by commissioning a photographer to send him from time to time a photographic report, which cannot possibly be falsified by his agent ; and an emperor may inform himself, by weekly photographs, of the progress of public works in the remotest corners of his empire, and see, stone by stone, the growth of every fortress on his frontier.

Photography fears no labour, and is not fastidious. With good atmospheric conditions and pure chemicals, it does not in the least signify to the photographic camera, whether you set it to copy a Lancashire factory, or a sculptured cathedral ; it will do either the one or the other accurately, but with utter indifference. Photography has neither feeling nor choice ; it is an unconscious slave, dead to all affection. Therefore it does well and thoroughly all that heartless, mindless work, which the old topographic draughtsmen used to do so badly and inadequately ; for if it has no affections, it has no repugnances, and will copy the ugliest house in England, and give you every foolish ornament, as if it were a gem of sculpture from a frieze of Phidias. In short, it will do precisely that kind of unintellectual, but accurate copyism of miscellaneous objects, which a true artist has no business with, and neither betray the impatience of the painter, nor the mockery of the caricaturist.

By doing this drudgery cheaper than it can be done by hand, the direct tendency of Photography is to elevate the position of the painter, since it restricts him more

and more to the intellectual fields of art, and must lead, sooner or later, to a truer definition of his calling.

As a means of art-education, its influence on the public is salutary. In spite of all its falsities, photography is the best teacher of the first element of criticism—the knowledge of the Facts of Form. It also supplies, what was very much wanted, a court of appeal whose impartiality is unimpeachable. On such matters of fact as the structure of a particular kind of rock, or the ramification of some definite species of tree, it is now frequently possible to decide a question by reference to a photograph which formerly would have remained open to unceasing dispute.

Photography can neither colour nor compose; therefore colour and composition in painting will be felt to be more precious than ever, and the lovers of intellectual art will prize its peculiar attributes yet more highly when they come to perceive the immense distance which these two mighty powers place between it and all photographic imitations of nature.

As a reproducer of works of real art Photography is very precious. How inimitably it renders the magnificent sculpture of the noblest Gothic architecture, the character of every statue being so perfectly given, without the intervention of any second person's feeling, that it is just as good to see one of these photographs as the thing itself, and travelling for architectural study becomes almost needless. And then the precious details of mouldering stones that no painter would ever copy with reverence enough; their texture rendered, as our art can never hope to render texture, not by coarse dragging of

opaque colour over sticky surfaces of varnish, but by fair honest drawing, inconceivably minute, of every microscopic shadow cast by the projecting grains of rough stone. I have one of these photographs before me. It is of the great central doorway of Amiens Cathedral, taken obliquely, so as to show that half of the arch that the sunshine fell upon, whilst the other is not seen, being too much foreshortened for its details to be easily distinguished, even if they were not lost in a black depth of exaggerated shade. There is, consequently, rather more than one-half of the sculpture visible. Now, in the visible part, I have just counted *thirteen great statues, and a hundred and forty smaller figures, without including those in twenty-six bas-reliefs*. Here is a whole collection of the best and noblest fine art in the world, placed by photography within everybody's reach for a few francs. I remember how Mr. Ruskin, in his pamphlet on pre-Raphaelitism, after alluding with some bitterness and much justice to the general silliness of our painters in their choice of subject, sent the reader to a broken bas-relief at Lincoln to see if his heart would not break too. And now in these few short years nearly all the best old bas-reliefs in Europe have been mirrored for us marvellously by collodion; and the great want that made the hearts of all true lovers of noble architecture ache with grief and pain, is at last most richly and abundantly satisfied. The photographers have done this for us all; let us warmly express our thanks and appreciation.

For the reproduction of pictures many persons, and one impersonal, but not the less powerful entity, the

Times newspaper, prefer photography to engraving. There is, of course, the fatal objection about the insensibility to yellow rays in the negative, with the result that what is yellow in the picture comes black in the positive, so that a golden sunset cannot be photographed at all; and although a yellow dress in a figure-picture may be of less consequence, it is nevertheless certain that the arrangement of light and shade in pictures containing yellow will always be lost in the photograph. But to balance this the advocates of photography insist with much truth on the absolute fidelity with which it renders the touch peculiar to each painter, and also the unapproachable perfection of its rendering of expression. The present state of the question appears to be this: pictures that will translate tolerably into photography are photographed, whilst the others are let alone for the present. Mr. Ruskin thinks that photography will supersede engraving, but not engravers, who, he believes, will find easier and more agreeable employment in translating pictures into black and white pen-drawings, to be afterwards reproduced by the photograph. By this intervention of the draughtsman, we should have a gain and a loss—the gain in the truth of light and shade, no longer revolutionised by the photograph's exclusive sensibility to actinic rays; the loss in the authentic and *autographic* qualities of touch and expression. A third, and far more perfect way in which paintings by living artists might be multiplied for the public, would be if *they*, and not the engravers, did the translation into light and shade, the pen-drawing, which might be afterwards fac-similed by the photograph. Thus, by a procedure more certain, and better within

command than etching, original and authentic work, of first-rate quality, might become attainable at a very moderate price. The engravers would, of course, still be necessary for the interpretation of all dead artists, and of such living ones as were too much occupied with painting to have time or inclination for this pen-drawing.

Painters who, like myself, are accustomed to design a carefully finished cartoon in black and white before beginning to paint, may, at any rate, have their cartoons perfectly reproduced by photography without the intervention of any draughtsman or engraver; and such reproductions are so perfectly autographic as to possess a far higher value than any kind of engraving. The only objection to this is, that the cartoon is never so minutely careful in execution as the finished picture.

In favour of the photographic reproductions of oil-pictures it is right to observe that, although entirely false in all such light and dark as depends upon colour, they are far nearer to the picture in the reproduction of its light than photographs taken from nature are to natural light. There are, at any rate, in photographs from pictures, none of those great spaces of white or black vacancy which distress and dissatisfy us so much in photographs from nature. Does the reader imagine that a photograph from nature is any truer in its translation of colour? Does he fancy, as I find some photographers do, that the photographic rendering of pictures *alone* is false in this respect, whilst the photographic interpretation of nature is true? It is astonishing to hear the objection continually raised against photographs from pictures, that they do not translate their colour truly into

black and white as an engraving does, but change all its arrangements, when the very people who make the objection accept the photographic translation of *Nature's* colouring as trustworthy. I suppose it is because they have only looked at celebrated pictures, and have never really looked at any natural scene ; but, to anybody who *has*, the photographic interpretation of nature is considerably less satisfactory than its interpretation of art.

With reference to drawings and etchings the objection about actinic rays does not hold ; and the importance of photography, as a means of reproducing the most precious uncoloured works of elder art, is now fully recognised, especially by artists. I have one or two of Raphael's drawings, so perfectly reproduced that even the texture of the paper Raphael used is accurately imitated on the smooth albumen of the positive, and every stain of it too. I remember how much Mr. Leslie used to enjoy a set of photographs he had from Rembrandt's etchings, and how thoroughly he appreciated the value of photography as an authentic reproducer of such works. The photographic reproductions of free sketches by great men are quite above all competition by means of engraving.

The conclusions we have arrived at in the course of this inquiry may be briefly summed up as follows :—

Photography and painting are for ever independent of each other, and there is no manner of rivalry possible between them. Each has its own path.

Painting does not need the help of photography, and in practice can be little served by it, except for occasional reference.

Because painting deals with truths not attainable by

photography, as the relations of light and colour, and the imaginative interpretation as opposed to the literal imitation of nature.

Nevertheless, photographic memoranda of isolated facts may, when intelligently consulted, be of much utility to painters.

To art in general photography has rendered several inestimable services.

First, by relieving it of the drudgery of detailing commonplace facts where imagination and feeling are not wanted, and a sense of beauty would only inflict unprofitable suffering on an artist who could not find anything to satisfy it.

And as leading, consequently, to a clearer understanding on the part of the public of the nature of fine art as distinguished from unintelligent copyism.

And as affording a sound basis for criticism by putting within everybody's reach an encyclopædia of the rudimentary facts of nature.

And, lastly, by reproducing works of real art in an authentic and reliable manner.

CHAPTER V.

WORD PAINTING AND COLOUR PAINTING.

THE comparison between words and colours, as means for the expression of artistic ideas, has for a long time possessed a great attraction for me ; and as it is a matter which very closely concerns all workers in literature and painting, I intend here to offer such results as I have been able to arrive at ; so far, at least, as they may influence the practical labours of those who write or paint.

I fully accept the fundamental principle that every art should be solely exercised in those directions where it is naturally better fitted to succeed than any other art. The only critic who has given anything like its due importance to this principle is Mr. Ruskin, and his maintenance of it is one of his chief claims to attention. For it is evident that, if we will only frankly accept the hints which the Supreme Artist is continually giving us, we shall find in the inherent difficulties and facilities of each art an intelligible indication of the sort of work which he intended us to do in it. All noble art makes the best possible use of its materials and means of work. To attempt anything whatever in one art which can be both

better and more easily done in another art, is barbarous, and the sign of a vulgar deadness of feeling in both the artist and his employer. For the artist who can endure to do at all that which it is impossible for him ever to do really well, must be ignoble in feeling; and the purchaser who buys bad work, that has cost toil and pain, rather than good work, which has cost only pleasurable and healthful labour, must be alike indifferent to the excellence of the work of art, and the well-being of the artist; that is, both dull and heartless.

Now, when we examine the means and materials employed in the fine arts, we are at once struck with their extreme diversity and their evident serviceableness in separate and quite peculiar directions. And the sign of healthy art is, that it tries always for that kind of success *alone* to which the nature of its material points; all other success it neglects as out of its province.

Thus the aim of the sculptor in marble is to render the muscular and bony structure of the human body, not the intricacy of tree structure; and this is a consequence of the material alone; for a sculptor may be just as much alive to the beauty of trees as a landscape-painter, but no sculptor who loved a tree would ever attempt to carve one out of marble. Neither can marble sculpture approach the infinite delicacy of the natural hair; so a true artist in marble will never try much either for leaves or hair, but give a conventional indication of what he means, and let that suffice. But the solid modelling of the naked human frame is precisely what may best be imitated in marble, whose surface, as a sculptor leaves it, bears so close a resemblance to the

exquisite lustreless smoothness' of a fine human body, that all writers, when describing the most admirable human forms, are reduced to one simile, and compare them unanimously to marble.

In the art of glass-painting, we may see at once that the production of vast effects of jewel-like brilliancy ought to be its aim ; not the imitation of nature. For, as an imitation of nature, painting on glass must always be infinitely inferior to painting on canvass, from its fatal want of opaque body ; whereas, for brilliant effects of coloured light, nothing in art can for a moment be compared to the splendour of a great Gothic window, every square foot of whose enormous area is brighter than an open casket of mingled sapphires and rubies and emeralds.

Of musical instruments, too ; has not each its especial province in the art ? How comes it that the old unaltered violin has kept its place so well for these two centuries past ? By earnest study on the part of its professors, of the nature of their instrument, and by their loyal obedience to the laws of its constitution. Violinists of the first rank understand too well its powers of artistic gradation and emotion, ever to abandon them in a vain search after unattainable harmonies. And the whole progress of violin-playing has been a steady development of those qualities which belong to it and to no other instrument.

It is needless to multiply illustrations. The reader may rest assured that the principle is true. The right progress of every art is in the development of the resources peculiar to itself alone, not in encroaching upon

the dominions of other arts. Whenever an art *does* so encroach, it is bound to confess the trespass by a frank abandonment of all its pretensions, as a good sculptor will carve lace and hair so rudely that it will be quite evident he took no pains to get them like nature.

The bearing of this doctrine on the subject of word-painting is obvious. If colours are better adapted for painting than words, all good word-painting ought to be confessedly slight and imperfect. How slight and imperfect it really is I intend to prove in this chapter; pointing out, at the same time, certain peculiarities in word-painting as a distinct art, which seem to fix the limits of its legitimate cultivation.

In form and colour a very slight degree of complexity is enough to baffle word-painting altogether. For a description of extreme simplicity—as, for instance, “a disc of sheet copper a foot in diameter, and one-sixteenth of an inch thick”—words are just as good, for all practical purposes, as colour, though they would not give the gradations of light upon the copper disc, nor the changes of tint caused by the atmosphere on different portions of its surface. By a convention long ago established amongst heralds, words are, in heraldry, a full and perfect substitute for colour; the art of heraldic blazoning being simply the art of *writing out* coats of arms. About twelve years ago, being for some time deeply absorbed in the histories of twenty or thirty families with which my own had connected itself by marriage, I became a perfect master of this art of blazoning, and could at once, and without the slightest hesitation, write out in words the most elaborate shields, full of accumulated quarter-

ings. I have nearly forgotten this art now, and could scarcely trust myself to write out arms for a heraldic engraver ; but I well remember how entirely reliable my blazons were twelve years ago, and how perfect a substitute for gilding and paint.

If we examine a single coat of arms, we shall at once perceive that its describability is due entirely to artistic poverty.

“ Paly wavy of six, or and azure, a lion rampant pean, on a chief gules, three crosses fleury ermine.”

I have selected the most elaborate coat I can recollect. If I had chosen the most simple, as, for instance, “Argent a bend sable,” the artistic poverty would have been more evident. But a shield of fifty quarterings is infinitely poorer, artistically, than the commonest natural object, and therefore infinitely easier to describe.

For, first of all, there is no gradation in heraldry. The colours are all crude ; *or*, *azure*, and *gules* merely mean gold leaf, ultramarine, and vermilion, just as they come from the colourman’s.

And again, the variety in the forms is finite ; it is even exceedingly limited. “Paly wavy of six”—a herald knows at once what *that* means ; he has drawn it a hundred times. “A lion rampant”—the creature and its three or four attitudes are kept in stock in every heraldic mind ready for immediate application. And the cross fleury being a rigid conventional form, is as easy to remember as the + in algebra.

Let us see whether we can make an equally accurate description of some similar objects in nature.

“Paly wavy or and azure.” There is often wavy or

and azure in sunset skies amongst the upper clouds; but, as every curve in it is full of unexpected and indescribable changes, and every hue of it full of infinite, and most subtle, and most inexplicable gradations, how *can* words ever blazon this Divine heraldry at all? There are lions enough in Africa yet, in spite of English rifles; but no words can perfectly picture the least of their mighty movements. "Pean," "ermine," "gules," "or," and "azure!" good enough for the splendour of lordly pride; but not good enough for one wreath of perishing cloud, nor one feather in a wild duck's wing!

Now all good writers who ever lived have frankly confessed the impossibility of accurate description of natural scenery in words. Good writers scarcely ever attempt it. Their descriptions, even when most elaborate, are no more than stimulants to the reader's imagination, rather trying to make him imagine a scene for himself than vainly endeavouring to convey to him a truthful picture of something he has not seen. All word description that goes beyond this, though it may be highly accurate and ingenious, is, so far as the reader is concerned, positively useless.

For the accurate realization of a complex word description, even if it were possible, which it is not, would require an effort of the intellect so enormous that not one mind in a million would be capable of it, unless previously trained for years to practical landscape-painting.

Even the best word-painting of our own day, whenever it reaches a certain point of elaboration, is probably only comprehensible by devoted students of nature, and *they* always realize something else than the object described.

Word-painting of the human figure seems easier than that of landscape, because the varieties of human form are restrained within more definite limits] than the varieties of mountains and clouds. But it is an error to suppose that words are capable of anything like accuracy even in figure-painting. The *signalement* attached to an ordinary French passport is a kind of description where a rigidly prosaic accuracy would be really of use, and is seriously attempted. The object, of course, is to render the passport not transferable. But passports are transferable, notwithstanding the *signalement*, and are very frequently transferred. A young French lady, whom I know, was travelling very lately with a passport which she might have transferred to almost any other young French lady of her age and complexion ; and as her complexion is the most usual in France, her passport would have been available for most of her young friends in case of an emergency. A simple expedient is now open to continental governments which would effectually render passports non-transferable. A government has only to require that a photographic portrait of the bearer of every passport be printed from a glass negative upon the paper of the passport itself, and the passport would be of use to nobody but its owner. That is to say, a government which desires to have the *signalements* on its passports accurate must abandon word-painting, which *cannot* be accurate.

Everybody must have felt the difficulty of describing persons in common conversation. Who has not heard, or taken a part, in some such conversation as the following?

“ Miss Brown is going to be married.”

"Really! Have you seen the happy man?"

"Yes, I met him at Brown's."

"Well, what sort of a man is he?"

"Oh, he's a parson; and he has eight hundred a year of his own besides his living."

"Well, but what does he look like?"

"Let me see. Upon my word, I can scarcely tell you."

"Well, but you can remember something about him. Is he tall? is he fat? is he good looking?"

"Oh, as to that, he's little, and rather plump, and, I should say, rather handsome."

"Is he like anybody we both know?"

"He rather reminds me of Smith, that used to be curate here, but he isn't like him."

"Has he brown hair, and a dark complexion?"

"No; he has red hair, and a fair complexion."

"Intelligent looking?"

"Yes; and he's got blue eyes, and good teeth. There—are you satisfied?"

Now this description of a man really goes about as far as descriptions generally can or do go. It is very like a French *signalement*. It is just the sort of description one gives when pestered by a questioner. Novelists and poets say a great deal more; but when their descriptions go beyond this, they always leave the physical man himself, and digress into hints about his character and life.

As an illustration of the difficulty of conveying a true image of anybody by words, take the common case of a child who has lost its mother at birth. If no portrait of the mother exists, that child has no chance

of ever getting to know what she was like. All the neighbours know, all the child's elder relations know, he is never tired of asking questions about his mother, and they answer all his questions as well as they can ; but they cannot, by means of words, transfer to his brain the image of her which exists so vividly in their own ; and he goes on through life, actually surrounded by a thousand truthful portraits of his mother, impressed on the brains of his friends and contemporaries, not one of which, in spite of all his ardent longing, will he ever be permitted to see.

The art of word-painting has its secrets. Its first law is brevity. It is not possible to produce, with an elaborate word-picture, that single-stroke effect which makes the power of an elaborate colour-picture. For a long word-description must first be read from beginning to end before there is any chance of a perfect image being produced by it ; and then the reader must gather up and fit together all the parts of it like a child's puzzle-map—no easy matter, especially for indolent or half-interested readers. It is on this account that long word-descriptions are generally so terribly fatiguing, and make such exhausting demands on the reader's energy.

The next secret is to attempt nothing that words are manifestly incapable of doing. It is needless to aim at accuracy. Very rude, broad, imperfect sketching is all that words are fit for. To try after imitative accuracy is a mere waste of time, and is certain to make the reader skip the passage, if he does not shut the book.

The object of the word-painter being to make the reader imagine a scene for himself, he must profoundly

understand the capacity of ordinary people's imaginations, and take good care not to go beyond it.

The commonest trick of famous and clever word-painters is to dazzle people by sounding phrases and brilliant metaphors into the belief that they have really received a very noble impression, when the whole force of the impression, if analysed, would be found to be due to the music of the sentences, and the splendour of the metaphors, *not* to the natural scene which is the pretext for them.

Our best modern English word-painters are, amongst the poets, Tennyson, Shelley, Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, and Keats, in order of excellence.

And of prose writers, Ruskin stands quite alone; then after him, but at a great distance, come about a dozen others whom it is needless to particularise.

Of all these I give to Tennyson the first place. Even Ruskin, the best prose word-painter who ever lived, says that no description of his is worth four lines of Tennyson.

Tennyson seems to me to understand the limitations of word-painting better than any other man. There is not the slightest straining after unattainable fidelities in any one of his descriptions. They go no farther than the limits of the art allow; and they are always exquisite as far as they go. This is the highest praise that can be given to any artist, because it implies his perfect conception of the boundaries of his art, and his mastery over all that lies within those boundaries.

Shelley's painting has a remarkable resemblance to Turner's, which I think no critic has hitherto pointed out. There are the same splendour, colour, and mystery,

the same love of clouds and water, the same unreality and abstraction. It seems to me that if Shelley had given himself a pictorial instead of a literary training, he might, if he had lived, have rivalled Turner on his own ground.

Byron's word-painting is too passionate to be in any way accurate. It owes all its power to fire of language and strength of imagery. The reader is never really moved by the scene described, but by the vivid images and allusions it calls forth from the poet.

Scott's descriptions are affectionate and often very spirited in their way, but not always artistic. They are seldom pictorially conceived. They harmonise, however, very well with the vigorous human action of his characters. His view of nature, though he seems to have enjoyed colour, was perhaps rather that of a sportsman happy to be out in the open air than that of a devoted student of landscape.

Keats might have made an excellent word-painter if he had lived; but I do not share Mr. Ruskin's too humble veneration for what he actually wrote. His words are often very cleverly fitted in quaint odd ways, and do, no doubt, attain a peculiar power which I dare say would be difficult to imitate, if it were desirable, which it certainly is not. Mr. Ruskin himself is, when a little excited, a much better writer of English than Keats, in his brief career, ever came to be.

Wordsworth knew more of natural scenery than any other writer not also a painter—knew as much, I should say, as many a professed landscape-painter; but as an artist in words he attempted too much. I, who am a

painter and who know the scenery Wordsworth described, can vouch for the delicate truthfulness of his descriptions. They contain evidences of observation very rare in literature; but they are without effect on readers ignorant of landscape, because they require powers of memory and imagination in the reader, which no reader who is not a profound observer of nature can possibly possess.

Mr. Ruskin's art of description in prose is in every way wonderful. He complained somewhere that his readers missed the arguments in his books, and dashed at the descriptions. A novel complaint truly! What author but Mr. Ruskin ever found his descriptions dangerously seductive? Other people's descriptions are skipped habitually by the prudent reader. Mr. Ruskin's, it appears, do positive injury to the graver and more argumentative parts of his writings. He is decidedly the first author who has made landscape description too attractive. And when we try to get at the reason for this attractiveness in his word-pictures, we very soon see that it is mainly owing to an unusual magnificence of language, and a studied employment of metaphor.

Charlotte Brontë was by no means a weak sketcher in words: many of her descriptions prove great literary power. They are more concentrated than Mr. Ruskin's, but neither so profound nor so grandly conceived.

Thackeray has great and stirring powers of description, which he too seldom exercises.

Marian Evans does really good landscape-sketching, of an intensely truthful character. There are no better quiet pictures in their way in any literature than the

brief ones which occur in "Adam Bede," and the "Mill on the Floss."

George Sand has a passionate love for nature, with the intensest feeling. She understands the *expression* of landscape, and renders it with great power. Her interest in landscape seems to strengthen as she grows older, her latest novels being remarkable for their evidence of close and recent observation of nature. Her descriptions are thoroughly masterly and artistic, and I rank them very high as specimens of what may be done with words.

Lamartine's are less passionate, more contemplative, more elaborately worked out as a whole, less elaborately perhaps in the most essential and significant details. In his prose they often become extremely tiresome, but never in his verse, whose exquisite construction carries the reader on.

Of these writers I will take Tennyson as a poet, and Ruskin as a writer of prose, giving extracts from these two only, for the limits of my space would not allow of an adequate study of the others.

And first, I am sorry to say, the Tennyson pictures are by no means numerous. There are scarcely fifty of them in all. So little faith has this prince of poet landscapists in the powers of verbal art, that he employs it very rarely and very briefly.

The first that occur are in "Mariana." *

1. With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all :
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden-wall.

* For convenience of subsequent reference I number the extracts.

The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.

Here there is no attempt at form, and little at colour. The moss is simply all described as *blackest*. This is near enough for poetry ; but a painter knows that this black moss would, in nature, be full of purples and greys infinitely various. The gradations in the moss on the flower-plots are not so much as alluded to, for a volume of description would not have conveyed them to the reader's mind. The sadness and strangeness of the broken sheds may, however, be mentioned verbally, because these are mental feelings, which are the peculiar province of language. It is not the broken sheds that are in themselves sad, but their appearance excites that feeling in the poet, who conveys the feeling to his reader when he could not possibly convey the form. The extreme slightness of the description of the grange itself is equally apparent: it is lonely, and moated, and thatched, and the thatch is out of repair—no more.

Now, let us suppose that I were to select this subject for a picture, what then ? As Tennyson treats it slightly in words, can I also treat the subject with equal slightness on canvass ?

No. Because the art of colour-painting is so infinitely superior to the art of word description that far more is required of it, and it *cannot* be so rude and imperfect if it would. I have already pointed out the impossibility of painting moss as rudely as Tennyson describes it. For his blackest moss I must set an elaborate palette of

purples and greys, with perhaps one touch of real black on one of the nearer flower-plots; whereas he blackens them all alike, superlatively and indiscriminately, as if there were no such thing as gradation in the world.

And then the *forms* of the mosses? Every patch of moss *must*, in a picture, have a form of some sort; for in nature every patch of moss has an outline designed on the object it attaches itself to, which is not less delicate and elaborate than the outline of England on the sea. Tennyson, of course, takes care not to talk about the forms of the mosses; he is too much of an artist to waste his words. A poem the length of "Paradise Lost" would not describe accurately the form of the mosses on one of the flower-plots. And the plots themselves, how many were there of them? Tennyson did not count them: saw the flower-plots in the vision, but took no heed of their number. But in my picture my flower-plots must of necessity be countable, and I must decide how many I will put. No answer from the poet. But the painter cannot avoid these details. His superior power of description is accompanied by the need of larger and more accurate knowledge.

And the garden-wall, what were its height and length? was it of brick or of stone? And the broken sheds, ruinous we see, but how large were they, how shaped, and on what side of the house were they situated? And then the most important thing of all, the grange. Not one word of architectural detail. The reader is to imagine, as he best can, a moated grange—any old house with a ditch round it will do. Tennyson knew that the imaginative reader would make a very good

moated grange for himself, and that the dull, unimaginative reader would never be able to realize the most elaborate description, so it was of no use to attempt one. But no painting could possibly be so vague. A house in a picture *must* have definite architectural forms. They cannot be dispensed with. And the painter here, as in everything else, requires hard knowledge of forms and colours, where the poet will satisfy us with a sweet-sounding word.

The fourth stanza of "Mariana" contains a little detailed foreground picture in the pre-Raphaelite manner :—

2. About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark :
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.

It would have been difficult to compress more of Nature into so confined a compass of verse: but the reader will easily see for himself that a painter would either have to invent, or to seek out in Nature, a thousand details that the poet has not given us. The shape of the sluice is not mentioned, nor its size either, and the colouring of the marish-mosses is not even hinted at. The poplar was silver-green, but there are some millions of poplars in France, "all silver-green, with gnarled bark," so that this does not amount to a description of any particular poplar. So one might say of an Academy model, that she was "all flesh-colour,

with a smooth skin," but that would not amount to a recognisable portrait of the individual woman. The waste was level, and the horizon rounded the landscape with grey; but every artist knows that in the flattest, dullest countries, there are no two landscapes alike, and yet this sketch is as general as that of the poplar, and is applicable to any treeless flat.

It is like the opening sketch in "The Dying Swan":—

3. The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.

But this is made rather more definite in character by the distance, which is well put in, and true in effect:—

4. Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.

And the colouring of the mosses on the water is given this time:—

5. And far thro' the marish green and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

A painter, however, would have to know *where* the purple and green and yellow were, and what proportion of the field of vision was occupied by each. And he would have to paint not merely *purple*, but a thousand varieties of it; not merely *green*, but infinite gradations of bluish green, yellowish green, and green much neutralised by red; not merely yellow, but delicate changes of

grey and gold in the yellow. For the painter goes so infinitely beyond the writer in landscape, that the most detailed written pictures are almost as crude as heraldic blazoning in comparison with painters' work.

There are two magnificent lines in "Oriana"—

6. When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow.

It would take a painter a month to realize the first line on canvass. When snow lies in the hollows of rough land, it assumes outlines of a complexity quite infinite and exceedingly difficult to draw.. It is all very well for a poet to say "ribb'd," and so have done with the difficulty, just as he would say of a ship's hull in process of construction, that it was "ribb'd," using the same word for both. And it is the very word which gives so much truth and value to the two capital lines which Wordsworth made for Coleridge, and which Coleridge used in the beginning of the fourth part of the "Ancient Mariner"—

7. And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the *ribbed* sea-sand.

The poets may use the same word for snow in mountain stream-furrows, and sand corrugated by waves, but a painter could not render both with the same kind of work. In the one case, he would have to understand and declare an immense variety of facts concerning mountain anatomy, of which the poet might remain ignorant without injury to his verse, and, in the other case, a totally different order of facts concerning aqueous action on sand.

The "Lady of Shalott" opens with a charming description :—

8. On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot ;
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Thro' the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

This is the best and most perfect word-picture we have yet come upon. Yet there is not one form in it, and only the very slightest hint of colour. The willows whiten, and the walls and towers are grey, that is all the colouring. Form there is none, except the *length* of the fields, if we allow that shapeless length is indeed form at all. We are told nothing of the height of the walls, nor of the sort of battlements upon them, nor, indeed, whether they *had* battlements. We are not even informed whether the towers were round or square. To form any idea, whatever, from such a description as this, it is necessary that the reader should set his own imagination vigorously to work, which, in fact, every

reader does, according to his capacity, though in most instances unconsciously. When I analyse the picture that rises before me on reading these two stanzas, I find that I have little authority for it in Tennyson. It is a composition formed from memories of scenes I know, fitted together without the slightest regard for topography. For the fields I see are English, like the scenery of Kent; and the road is English; I confess to an anachronism in the road, for the one I see is most decidedly macadamised; but "many-tower'd Camelot" is, in my dream, not English at all, but an old towered town on the Rhone, opposite Avignon, with a few more towers and no modern houses. The island of Shalott is one I remember on the Yonne. And the four grey walls and four grey towers are a reminiscence of Wales.

Of course, as I am a painter by trade, I may be supposed to have a more vivid conception of the scene than an ordinary reader could have. It is true that I find it impossible to dispense with detail, and as Tennyson does not give me much, I have to make it all out for myself. Some people may have the capacity of imagining an abstract tower, that is neither round, nor square, nor any thing else in geometry, but I cannot; and in this instance, I imagine the towers of Camelot for the most part round, and those of Shalott hexagonal.

The "Mariana in the South" opens with an admirable word-picture:—

9. With one black shadow at its feet
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines :

A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore
In glaring sand and inlets bright.

The black shadow is, of course, a violent exaggeration. No shadow in broad daylight is ever really black or anything like it. The shadow in this instance, as the day was hot and dim, would probably be a pale greenish brownish grey. But the word "black" is right enough in the verse, because common people call everything black that is a little darker than the things about it. Thus, here in the Highlands, two beautiful islands near the one I live upon are called "The Black Islands," though, in reality, I know—for I have painted them—that there is not one touch of black about them in the day-time; the colouring, which is extremely rich and various, being all pale purples, and pale greens, and silvery greys. So the famous Black Mount is all green turf, with scars of reddish rock; and the Black Point on Loch Awe is all purple and green.

But there was yet another reason for the black shadow. The black shadow was not on the land, but on Mariana's life. That shadow was indeed black as despair and death, so the poet blackened the shadow of the house to make us feel melancholy and uncomfortable under it.

The line which tells us that there was a faint blue ridge upon the right is more than usually explicit. The ridge is coloured with a faint blue, and it is on the right hand, so we know comparatively a good deal about it. The river-bed is empty in front of the house. An empty river-bed, by the bye, is one of the most difficult things

in the world to draw, and we have here no hint of form. There were glaring sand and bright inlets on the distant shore. We are told no more.

10. There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
 The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
 Stands up and takes the morning : but in front
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
 The crown of Troas.

There is great knowledge of landscape in this sketch. It is the best Tennyson has hitherto done in blank verse. The *motion* of the vapour is a touch peculiar to word-painting ; motion, of this intermittent kind, at least, being very difficult to suggest in oil. The *long* brook is good, too, and the succession of its cataracts. The height of Gargarus is most artistically indicated. He "stands up and takes the morning ;" a good artifice of language. The columned citadel of Ilion fills up the distance well, seen through the opening gorge. Much art has been bestowed on this description, and it is a noble example of the master.

Yet, in the whole description, from beginning to end, there is not one single word about colour. It is as colourless as an engraving. We do not observe this until we look critically, because we imagine the vapour grey, the

lawns green, and the flowers blue, red, violet, yellow, &c. Nothing of this colour is told us, however; and if we fancy the snows of Gargarus rosy in the early light, we owe the colour to our own imagination, for Tennyson tells us nothing.

Neither is there one hint of form. We have a valley, and a brook, and a mountain, and a citadel; but no individuality of form to distinguish these from any other valley, brook, mountain, or citadel, save that the valley is lovelier than all the Ionian valleys, and the citadel is "columned."

The passage, however, excites the imagination mightily; nor could any true artist read it without at once beholding both colour and form in admirable combination.

A very similar picture is in the "Lotos Eaters," at the opening:—

11. Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red west: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!

In a painted picture the colour of the moon could not have been omitted ; and though the description of the streams is marvellously truthful and excellent in every way, still it is formless. Nevertheless, as the opening to *Ænone* is the finest description in Tennyson's blank verse, so this is the best in his rhymes.

I have criticised these word-pictures hitherto, but it seems needless now any longer to point out in what respect they differ from colour-pictures. I shall therefore give a few more without comment, and the reader will see for himself how very slight they are. They owe their power entirely to their appeal to the imagination ; in themselves they have rarely either form or colour.

Yet, as I have hitherto directed the reader's attention to the weakness of even the best word-painting in comparison with colour, I am glad to point out something which painting represents so inadequately that well-ordered words describe it better. The weakest point of the art of painting is its feebleness of light. Poetry, which recalls to our recollection the light of nature itself, has a great advantage here. It is not, like painting, bound down to mere white lead. Thus, in the exquisite " *St. Agnes*," the verses—

12. Deep on the convent roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon,

are quite unrealizable in paint, because no painter could get the light necessary for the sparkling of the snow.

The same power of landscape description which we have found in the miscellaneous poems was manifested once or twice in the " *Princess*," about half a dozen times

very grandly in "In Memoriam," and once in "Maud." In the two latter poems, however, the natural scenery is neither so clearly, nor so truly, seen as before, owing to the real or feigned passion of the singer. The tone adopted in the "Idylls of the King" is less perturbed, and, therefore, natural objects are more truly sketched, but still as briefly as ever. The simplicity of these sketches is something remarkable :—

13. And thither came Geraint, and underneath
Beheld the long street of a little town
In a long valley, on one side of which,
White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose ;
And on one side a castle in decay,
Beyond a bridge that spanned a dry ravine :

Again—

14. Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
His charger trampling many a prickly star
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.
Here stood a shattered archway plumed with fern ;
And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers :
And high above a piece of turret stair,
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,
And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

Here is a good bit :—

15. The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
And white sails flying on the yellow sea.

And the following pretty "landscape with figures," which is all that a word sketch needs to be :—

16. So thro' the green gloom of the wood they past,
And issuing under open heavens beheld
A little town with towers, upon a rock,
And close beneath, a meadow gem-like chased
In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it.

There is a simile in "Enid" which recalls a very beautiful piece of sea colour :—

17. A splendid silk of foreign loom
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue
Played into green.

By the way, I am glad to see that Tennyson is artist enough to like blue and green together. Milliners say it is a heterodox combination, an incestuous marriage of too near kindred. Nature, of course, puts blue and green together everywhere. It seems to me that green is never at its loveliest, if blue is altogether absent.

The jewels on this robe call forth another happy simile, describing an effect I have seen very often here :—

18. When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,
And with the dawn ascending lets the day
Strike where it clung.

In the story of "Vivien," there is a magnificent little sketch of lake scenery :—

19. Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,
When the lake whiten'd and the pinewood roar'd,
And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow,

and another, in "Elaine," very simple, but true :—

20. A glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side.

And a castle in sunset light :—

21. Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.

There is a city in the story of "Elaine" which is twice called "the dim rich city," a proof that the poet was pleased with the double epithet. It strikes the imagination, and defines nothing, which is exactly what a prudent poet likes.

In the beginning of "Guinevere," there is a chilling sketch of misty moonlight :—

22. One low light betwixt them burn'd
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

Such are the principal Tennysonian landscapes. I believe there are scarcely a dozen that I have not quoted. They are few, and very slight, but very masterly. In the "Idylls of the King," the sketches are briefer and barer than ever; some of them only a word or two, yet enough.

Mr. Ruskin's descriptions are in direct contrast to these. They are marked by strong, but hopeless, effort to approach the veracity of oil. Ruskin does not rest so contentedly within the limits of word-painting as Tennyson. This comes of his practical knowledge of linear

and colour art. He writes very much as a painter would write who had an equal command of language.

He is driven continually to 'metaphor and simile. He is as bad as Byron in this respect. The use of metaphor and simile is not a sign of the strength of words, but of their weakness. Metaphor is neither possible nor necessary in oil-painting, for that art is strong enough to dispense with so poor an expedient. But all language is metaphorical, from beginning to end, our most prosaic forms of speech being merely old dead metaphors. Ruskin's metaphors, however, are neither old nor dead, but both new and alive ; and a metaphor is nothing without novelty.

Mr. Ruskin does not rhyme like Tennyson ; but he obtains his musical effects another way. He gets his rhymes at the beginning of his words instead of the end ; he employs largely the artifice of alliteration. And, though his sentences be not cast into lengths of ten syllables, according to rule, they have a subtle, inexplicable metre and melody of their own.

Mr. Ruskin's knowledge of nature is quite that of an artist. Though Tennyson never describes falsely, there is no evidence of any very vast acquirement in his descriptions ; but in those of Ruskin there *is* such evidence.

He has given us one or two extracts from his "private diary." This diary, I suppose, is to him what a portfolio of sketches is to a landscape-painter—it contains the first impressions of natural effect and forms, arrested while yet vivid and clear. From these the magnificent descriptions, which seem to us written from memory only, are afterwards carefully and, perhaps, laboriously elaborated.

Mr. Ruskin trusts, I believe, very little to his memory, which he considers worthless, and still less to invention, which he does not suppose himself to possess. I think he possesses both, if only in a minor degree. Without memory, such writing as his cannot be achieved: and there is an arrangement in words, of which his writings contain many examples, which is as purely and as marvellously inventive as the arrangement of colours by Titian, or of sounds by Beethoven.

He is angry with people, and reasonably angry, because, instead of paying attention to his arguments, they are always admiring his language. Nothing is more provoking to a man who has really something to communicate than to discover that his audience is busy thinking about his words instead of their meaning. In the case of Mr. Ruskin, the attraction to the words is very strong; and, when ordinary people talk about him, the only impression they ever appear to have received from his writings is, that he is a very disagreeable ill-natured man, with a wonderful knack of saying things cleverly. But of the main purpose of his work and life no person whom I have ever talked with seems to have the remotest conception.

Yet it is not astonishing that people should be charmed by Mr. Ruskin's style, faulty as it is. It is clear, downright, and earnest—good, unaffected, yet often quite familiar talk, like the talk of a refined but frank gentleman to some friend who enjoys his entire confidence.*

* The second volume of "*Modern Painters*" is written in an artificial style, imitated from old sermons. This was wisely abandoned in the subsequent volumes. The style of "*The Stones of Venice*" is grave and stern, and rather heavy in comparison to the later volumes of "*Modern Painters*."

For word-painting Mr. Ruskin is well prepared, by the vastness of his vocabulary, and the immense stores of miscellaneous information he has accumulated, not by reading only, but by personal observation and experiment. No writer before him ever possessed the *two* things necessary to a word-painter, a knowledge of external nature, and literary power, *both* in so great a degree. Turner may have known more of nature, but he was quite exceptionally unskilful in language—so clumsy, indeed, that by some defect of organization he hardly ever managed to construct an intelligible sentence. Byron may have been a better writer, and had, no doubt, an incomparably greater poetical gift; but, as he could neither paint nor draw, nor in any way comprehend pictorial art, he was for ever excluded from any perception of all those innumerable facts in nature which are alone made visible to students who work hard with pencil and brush. In observation of natural aspects, in range and extent of study, Mr. Ruskin is equal to many of our most accomplished landscape-painters. In force and manliness of speech he approaches nearer to Byron than any other writer.* Never in the history of literature was word-painter so gifted and so trained for his task.

Let us see what he makes out of it. Eye of artist, pen of poet, both in the service of one keen and ardent intellect! What will they not accomplish?

They move us, undeniably. We are carried along by the moving strength of his interminable sentences as by the might of a great river. We are excited as by the

* In spite of Mr. Ruskin's admiration for Keats, his own diction approaches, in lucidity, and splendour, and spirit, far nearer to Byron's.

actual sight of an unknown, glorious land. We are tranced with soft new melodies of language, and wonder that the old common words can ever be made to sound so strangely sweet. We listen to distinctions of quite unaccustomed delicacy and precision. For once word-pictures are not formless nor gradationless ; evidently this observer has felt every form, and followed every melting change of hue.

The descriptions, too, are many of them exceedingly long. It is a great proof of the writer's power that we can ever endure to read them through at all. It is obvious that Mr. Ruskin does all he can to make us understand the subjects he describes—that he spares no effort to waken our dull wits to some faint imagination of the splendours he has seen. No writer ever took so much pains to help the reader to a fair understanding of the subject in hand.

The result of it all is merely this. If the beautiful sentences excite our curiosity a little, so that we may be gotten to look at beautiful pictures, some good will have been accomplished, still more good if from the pictures we go yet farther and look at nature itself. But if we stop at the sweet sentences, and neither look at art nor nature, we shall not get out of them one single accurate idea of anything they tell of. We cannot form anything approaching to a true image of any natural scene from the clearest and most brilliant description in the world.

The only object which I should ever propose to myself in writing any description of natural scenery would be to induce readers to go and look at it for themselves, or else, if that is impracticable for them, to go and look at

the most faithful pictures of such scenery that may be accessible. I feel certain that all Ruskin's word-painting has been done with this intent only. The idea of really conveying a picture from one man's brain to another's, by means of mere words, is too hopeless to be thought of.

In the five volumes of "Modern Painters" there occur about thirty remarkable word-pictures, and some hundreds of brief allusions or sketches. I should like to extract all the best, but my space is limited, and I will content myself with a few.

The first is one of the early descriptions, written when the author was very young. Its object was to convey to the mind of the reader some conception of the intensity of natural light, and the splendour of natural colour, so as to make him feel the poverty and dinginess of Gaspar Poussin. There is little form, except "the noble outline of the domes of Albano," but form was not wanted for the argument.

23. "Not long ago, I was slowly descending this very bit of carriage-road, the first turn after you leave Albano, not a little impeded by the worthy successors of the ancient prototypes of Veiento. It had been wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct, lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outline of the domes of Albano, and graceful darkness of its ilex grove, rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber; the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep palpitating azure, half æther and half dew. The noon-day sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and their masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with

rain. I cannot call it colour, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the grey walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every blade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock—dark, though flushed with scarlet lichen, casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound; and over all, the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbéd repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea."

The following analysis of mountain detail indicates a perception of natural aspects which was, when published, quite new in literature :—

24. "A mass of mountain seen against the light may at first appear all of one blue; and so it is, blue as a whole, by comparison with other parts of the landscape. But look how that blue is made up. There are black shadows in it under the crags, there are green shadows along the turf, there are grey half-lights upon the rocks, there are faint touches of stealthy warmth and cautious light along their edges; every bush, every stone, every tuft of moss has its voice in the matter, and joins with individual character in the universal will."

The same perception in another department of landscape is manifested here :—

25. "Go out some bright sunny day in winter, and look for a tree

with a broad trunk, having rather delicate boughs hanging down on the sunny side near the trunk. Stand four or five yards from it with your back to the sun. You will find that the boughs between you and the trunk of the tree are very indistinct, that you confound them in places with the trunk itself, and cannot possibly trace one of them from its insertion to its extremity. But the shadows which they cast upon the trunk, you will find clear, dark, and distinct, perfectly traceable through their whole course, except when they are interrupted by the crossing boughs. And if you retire backwards, you will come to a point where you cannot see the intervening boughs at all, or only a fragment of them here and there, but can still see their shadows perfectly plain."

This kind of analysis of natural effect was, I repeat, entirely new in literature. Wordsworth had come nearer it than anybody; but though his emotion might be deeper, or his affections stronger, his critical insight was not so keen, as is proved by his ignorance of art.

Here is a valuable little passage about a snow-drift:—

26. "In the range of inorganic nature, I doubt if any object can be found more perfectly beautiful than a fresh, deep, snow drift, seen under warm light. Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness; its surface and transparency alike exquisite; its light and shade of inexhaustible variety and inimitable finish, the shadows sharp, pale, and of heavenly colour, the reflected lights intense and multitudinous, and mingled with the sweet occurrences of transmitted light."

And then lower down he mentions an Alp "of a form so exquisite that it might have been a lesson to Phidias." Something new to hear a critic talk like that! Your true classical critic would think it a great piece of condescension in a master of the figure to look at a landscape at all, without dreaming of his receiving "a lesson" from it.

The kind of observation which led to this way of

writing is shown by an extract given by the author from his private diary. It is a note of an effect on water at Venice.

27. "May 17, 4 p.m.—Looking east the water is calm, and reflects the sky and vessels, with this peculiarity: the sky, which is pale blue, is in its reflection of the same kind of blue, only a little deeper; but the *vessels' hulls, which are black, are reflected in pale sea-green; i.e.* the natural colour of the water under sunlight; while the *orange masts* of the vessels, wet with a recent shower, are reflected *without change of colour*, only not quite so bright as above. One ship has a white, another a red stripe, (I ought to have said, running horizontally along the gunwales), '*of these the water takes no notice.*'

"What is curious, a boat passes along with white and dark figures, the water reflects the dark ones in green, and misses out all the white; this is chiefly owing to the dark images being opposed to the bright reflected sky.

"A boat swinging near the quay casts an apparent shadow on the rippled water. This appearance I find to be owing altogether to the increased *reflective* power of the water in the shaded space; for the farther sides of the ripples therein take the deep pure blue of the sky, coming strongly dark on the pale green, and the nearer sides take the pale grey of the cloud, hardly darker than the bright green."

Of course this, and the other extracts from the same diary, are merely memoranda for the author's own use, not word-pictures worked up for the public eye.

There are fine sketches of sea in the section on water.

28. "There are two conditions of foam of invariable occurrence on breaking waves, of which I have never seen the slightest record attempted; first, the thick, creamy, curdling, overlapping, massy foam, which remains for a moment only after the fall of the wave, and is seen in perfection in its running up the beach; and, secondly, the thin white coating into which this subsides, which opens into oval gaps and clefts, marbling the waves over their whole surface, and connecting the breakers on a flat shore by long dragging streams of white.

“It is evident that the difficulty of expressing either of these two conditions must be immense. The lapping and curdling foam is difficult enough to catch, even when the lines of its undulation alone are considered ; but the lips, so to speak, which lie along these lines, are full, projecting, and marked by beautiful light and shade ; each has its high light, a gradation into shadow of indescribable delicacy, a bright reflected light, and a dark cast shadow : to draw all this requires labour, and care, and firmness of work, which, as I imagine, must always, however skilfully bestowed, destroy all impressions of wildness, accidentalism, and evanescence, and so kill the sea. Again, the openings in the thin subsided foam, in their irregular modifications of circular and oval shapes dragged hither and thither, would be hard enough to draw, even if they could be seen on a flat surface ; instead of which, every one of the openings is seen in undulation on a tossing surface, broken up over small surges and ripples, and so thrown into perspectives of the most hopeless intricacy.”

* * * * *

29. “Again, as respects the form of breakers on an even shore there is a difficulty of no less formidable kind. There is in them an irreconcilable mixture of fury and formalism. Their hollow surface is marked by parallel lines, like those of a smooth mill-weir, and graduated by reflected and transmitted lights of the most wonderful intricacy, its curve being at the same time necessarily of mathematical purity and precision ; yet at the top of this curve, when it nods over, there is a sudden laxity and giving way, the water swings and jumps along the ridge like a shaken chain, and the motion runs from part to part as it does through a serpent’s body. Then the wind is at work on the extreme edge, and instead of letting it fling itself off naturally, it supports it, and drives it back, or scrapes it off, and carries it bodily away ; so that the spray at the top is in a continual transition between forms projected by their own weight, and forms blown and carried off with their weight overcome. Then at last, when it has come down, who shall say what shape that may be called, which shape has none, of the great crash where it touches the beach ?”

* * * * *

30. “Seen from the land, the curl of the breakers, even in nature, is somewhat uniform and monotonous ; the size of the waves out at

sea is uncomprehended ; and those nearer the eye seem to succeed and resemble each other, to move slowly to the beach, and to break in the same lines and forms.

“Afloat even twenty yards from the shore, we receive a totally different impression. Every wave around us appears vast, every one different from all the rest ; and the breakers present, now that we see them with their backs towards us, the grand, extended, and varied lines of long curvature which are peculiarly expressive both of velocity and power. Recklessness, before unfelt, is manifested in the mad, perpetual, changeful, undirected motion, not of wave after wave, as it appears from the shore, but of the very same water rising and falling. Of waves that successively approach and break, each appears to the mind a separate individual, whose part being performed, it perishes, and is succeeded by another ; and there is nothing in this to impress us with the idea of restlessness, any more than in any successive and continuous functions of life and death. But it is when we perceive that it is no succession of wave, but the same water, constantly rising, and crashing, and recoiling, and rolling in again in new forms and with fresh fury, that we perceive the perturbed spirit, and feel the intensity of its unwearied rage. The sensation of power is also trebled ; for not only is the vastness of apparent size much increased, but the whole action is different ; it is not a passive wave, rolling sleepily forward until it tumbles heavily, prostrated upon the beach ; but a sweeping exertion of tremendous and living strength, which does not now appear to *fall*, but to *burst* upon the shore ; which never perishes, but recoils and recovers.”

The same habits of close and accurate observation of Nature, which formed the basis of Ruskin's earliest criticisms, are evident in his most recent volumes. For instance, in the fourth volume of “Modern Painters:”—

31. “But chance will not help us with the mountain. Its fine and faintly organized edge seems to be definitely traced against the sky ; yet let us set ourselves honestly to follow it, and we find, on the instant, it has disappeared : and that for two reasons. The first, that if the mountain be lofty, and in light, it is so faint in colour that the eye literally cannot trace its separation from the hues next to it. The other day I wanted the contour of a lime-

stone mountain in the Valais, distant about seven miles, and as many thousand feet above me ; it was barren limestone ; the morning sun fell upon it, so as to make it almost vermilion colour, and the sky behind it a bluish green. Two tints could hardly have been more opposed, but both were so subtle that I found it impossible to see accurately the line that separated the vermilion from the green. The second, that if the contour be observed from a nearer point, or looked at when it is dark against the sky, it will be found composed of millions of minor angles, crags, points, and fissures, which no human sight or hand can draw finely enough, and yet all of which have effect upon the mind."

These two sketches of a great precipice in the Alps are full of power :—

32. "And a new world of sublimity might be opened to us, if any painter of power and feeling would devote himself, for a few months, to these solemn cliffs of the dark limestone Alps, and would only paint one of them, as it truly stands, not in rain or storm, but in its own eternal sadness : perhaps best on some fair summer evening, when its fearful veil of immeasurable rock is breathed upon by warm air, and touched with fading rays of purple ; and all that it has of the melancholy of ruin, mingled with the might of endurance, and the foreboding of danger, rises in its grey gloom against the gentle sky ; the soft wreaths of the evening clouds expiring along its ridges one by one, and leaving it, at last, with no light but that of its own cascades, standing like white pillars here and there along its sides, motionless and soundless in their distance."

And again :—

33. "With its own patient and victorious presence, cleaving daily through cloud after cloud, and reappearing still through the tempest drift, lofty and serene amidst the passing rents of blue, it seems partly to rebuke, and partly to guard, and partly to calm and chasten, the agitations of the feeble human soul that watches it ; and that must be indeed a dark perplexity, or a grievous pain, which will not be in some degree enlightened or relieved by the vision of it, when the evening shadows are blue on its foundation, and the last rays of the sunset resting on the fair height of its golden Fortitude."

Here is a magnificent mountain-study :—

34. “ Green field, and glowing rock, and glancing streamlet, all slope together in the sunshine towards the brows of ravines, where the pines take up their own dominion of saddened shade ; and with everlasting roar in the twilight, the stronger torrents thunder down, pale from the glaciers, filling all their chasms with enchanted cold, beating themselves to pieces against the great rocks that they have themselves cast down, and forcing fierce way beneath their ghastly poise.

“ The mountain paths stoop to these glens in forkly zigzags, leading to some grey and narrow arch, all fringed under its shuddering curve with the ferns that fear the light ; a cross of rough-hewn pine, iron-bound to its parapet, standing dark against the lurid fury of the foam. Far up the glen, as we pause beside the cross, the sky is seen through the openings in the pines, thin with excess of light ; and, in its clear, consuming flame of white space, the summits of the rocky mountains are gathered into solemn crowns and circlets, all flushed in that strange faint silence of possession by the sunshine which has in it so deep a melancholy ; full of power, yet frail as shadows ; lifeless, like the walls of a sepulchre, yet beautiful in tender fall of crimson folds, like the veil of some sea spirit, that lives and dies as the foam flashes ; fixed on a perpetual throne, stern against all strength, lifted above all sorrow, and yet effaced and melted utterly into the air by that last sunbeam that has crossed to them from between the two golden clouds.”

I have selected studies of sea and mountain ; the next is a study of pine-trees :—

35. “ But the pine rises in serene resistance, self-contained ; nor can I ever without awe stay long under a great Alpine cliff, far from all house or work of men, looking up to its companies of pine, as they stand on the inaccessible juts and perilous ledges of the enormous wall, in quiet multitudes, each like the shadow of the one beside it—upright, fixed, spectral, as troops of ghosts standing on the walls of Hades, not knowing each other—dumb for ever. You cannot reach them, cannot cry to them ;—those trees never heard human voice ; they are far above all sound but of the winds. No foot ever stirred fallen leaf of theirs. All comfortless they stand, between the two eternities of the Vacancy and the Rock :

yet with such iron will, that the rock itself looks bent and shattered beside them—fragile, weak, inconsistent, compared to their dark energy of delicate life, and monotony of enchanted pride:—un-numbered, unconquerable.”

And of young pines, he says:—

36. “And amidst this delicate delight of cottage and field, the young pines stand delicatest of all, scented as with frankincense, their slender stems straight as arrows, and crystal white, looking as if they would break with a touch, like needles; and their arabesques of dark leaf pierced through and through by the pale radiance of clear sky, opal blue, where they follow each other along the soft hill-ridges, up and down.”

We must not forget the mosses and lichens, who have a peculiarly affectionate and beautiful passage all to themselves. The immense difficulty of word-painting is here honestly confessed, only it is half vanquished by the very eloquence of the confession itself:—

37. “Lichen, and mosses (though these last in their luxuriance are deep and rich as herbage, yet both for the most part humblest of the green things that live),—how of these? Meek creatures! the first mercy of the earth, veiling with hushed softness its dintless rocks; creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honour the scarred disgrace of ruin,—laying quiet finger on the trembling stones, to teach them rest. No words, that I know of, will say what these mosses are. None are delicate enough, none perfect enough, none rich enough. How is one to tell of the rounded bosses of furred and beaming green—the starred divisions of rubied bloom, fine-filmed, as if the Rock Spirits could spin porphyry as we do glass—the traceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, lustrous, arborescent, burnished through every fibre into fitful brightness and glossy traverses of silken change, yet all subdued and pensive, and framed for simplest, sweetest offices of grace?”

Then, speaking of their long life and endurance, he closes the chapter thus:—

38. “Yet, as in one sense the humblest, in another they are the most honoured of the earth-children. Unfading, as motionless, the

worm frets them not, and the autumn wastes not. Strong in lowliness, they neither blanch in heat nor pine in frost. To them, slow-fingered, constant-hearted, is entrusted the weaving of the dark, eternal, tapestries of the hills ; to them, slow-pencilled, iris-dyed, the tender framing of their endless imagery. Sharing the stillness of the unimpassioned rock, they share also its endurance ; and while the winds of departing spring scatter the white hawthorn blossom like drifted snow, and summer dims on the parched meadow the drooping of its cowslip-gold,—far above, among the mountains, the silver lichen-spots rest, star-like, on the stone ; and the gathering orange stain upon the edge of yonder western peak reflects the sunsets of a thousand years.”

Having now a rich little gallery of word-pictures, we will study the art a little more at our leisure.

We cannot help noticing, in the first place, that this prose word-painter, Ruskin, *looks* at nature with an intensity of gaze hitherto unknown amongst writers. For writers generally do not *actively look*, but only passively receive impressions ; and these idle writers, who are too lazy to look energetically, are always criticising painters who give delicate detail, because, say they, “we see no such detail in nature”—of course they do not, if they will not take the trouble to use their eyes. The same unobservant critics are very hostile to artists who paint uncommon but true effects, because they never put themselves in the way of seeing such effects ; and if by accident they find themselves face to face with one, in the course of a pleasure tour, will not look at it in earnest, have not intellect enough to analyse it, nor memory enough to remember it, nor skill enough with their fingers to make a memorandum of it. It is so wonderful and delightful a sight, such an astonishing novelty, to find a critic of art who really *does* conde-

scend to work hard with his eyes, out of doors, like a mere common painter, that I cannot help giving full expression to the feelings of satisfaction it awakens in me. What a habit of hard *looking* is proved by the extracts I have given ; and what successful *seeing* ! The analysis of mountain colour in the extract numbered 24, though habitual with all good modern landscape-painters, was, when written, a new achievement in literature. Wordsworth could not have done it—he would have seen the colour of the mass as a whole, but not analysed it like a painter. In our art of oil-painting, such analysis, but ten times more delicate, must always precede the construction of the picture, every detail of which must be so analysed before the first preparatory ground colours are laid ; and the more subtle the analysis, the more cunning the execution. I think Wordsworth would have rendered truthfully the shadows on the tree-trunk (25), and, perhaps, even the difficult mystery of the boughs, but certainly no other writer.

The resolute determination to know the fact, to accept nothing but the fact, and not to take natural truth on hearsay from the lips of preceding connoisseurs, which distinguishes Ruskin from other writers on art, would, if other evidence were wanting, be sufficiently proved by his honest recognition of certain facts of reflection in the quotation I have numbered 27. Such looking at nature as this is the basis of all criticism of art which has any real value ; but it is extremely rare, except amongst professional landscape-painters, and is only common amongst them since the epoch marked in the world's history by the fall of Napoleon. A true picture of such

facts of reflection as those described in quotation 27 would probably even yet be exposed to some severity of ignorant vituperation : the recognition by the water of certain objects ; its translation of their dark into pale green ; its utter denial of the existence of other objects ; its fidelity to two colours, the blue of the sky, and the orange of the masts, and carelessness of other colours ; all such puzzling FACTS are a stumbling-block and an offence to mere gallery connoisseurs.

The description of foam and waves in 28 is quite as observant as that of the reflections at Venice, and more studied and masterly in expression. If the reader will take the trouble to go through the three sea-studies once more, carefully noting the intensity of observation displayed in every line, and then think of the descriptions of sea in popular poetry and fiction, he will understand what I mean.

Then let him note the study of a mountain's *edge* against the sky in 31. In all the range of poetry, there exists no such piece of writing about mountains—nothing at all comparable to it on the score of delicacy of observation. What we have about mountains in Tennyson is good, but slight, as in the quotations I have numbered 4, 10, 11, 19 ; but this bit from Ruskin is as profound and observant as the best painter's work.

After observation, the most notable characteristics in Ruskin's word-painting are his sculptor-like love of *form*, and his painter-like love of *colour* ; his love and study of both being far superior to those of any writer that ever existed, and nearer the feeling of great artists. Let us seek first some evidence of his love of form.

Read over again the beginning of 29, about the form of breakers. And in 30 note the description of waves seen from behind their "grand, extended, and varied lines of long curvature."

The passage about the snow-drift (26) is equally good in form : "Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness." And the Alp, "of a form so exquisite, that it might have been a lesson to Phidias."

In many other passages that I have not quoted, especially those about clouds, there is quite a remarkable perception of form.

The quotations I have given are nearly all of them rich in colour. The first, numbered 23, is all one blaze of the richest colour, heightened by recent rain, and illuminated by the intensest light. The colour of the snow-drift (26), of course, calls forth an enthusiastic expression of admiration, its shadows are "sharp, pale, and of heavenly colour." The whole subject of 27 is the *colour* of some reflections. In 32, the cliff is "breathed upon by warm air, and touched with fading rays of purple." And again, in 33, "when the evening shadows are blue on its foundation, and the last rays of the sunset resting on the fair height of its golden Fortitude." And the young pines are "crystal white" (36). And the lichens have trceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, and the mosses have rounded bosses of furred and beaming green. And then (38) how he tells us that when the white hawthorn blossoms are scattered on the winds, like drifted snow, and summer dims on the parched meadow the drooping of its cowslip gold, "far above among the mountains, the silver. lichen spots rest, star-like, on the stone,

and the gathering orange stain upon the edge of yonder western peak reflects the sunsets of a thousand years."

Ruskin is so fond of colour that he hardly ever writes a description without telling us all about it that words will tell, whereas Tennyson and other poets very often leave it wholly to the reader's imagination, just as engravers do.

The great charm of Ruskin's descriptions to the popular mind is, however, not due to their scientific truth, which nobody but a painter cares much about, but to their pretty poetical fancies and fallacies. No doubt it needed some imagination, in short, something of the true poetical faculty, to invent such pretty fallacies at all ; but I hold them of small account in comparison with the deep truth of the observations they illustrate and embellish.

These fallacies exist in all the favourite bits of Ruskin—the bits that readers select for their friends, and that critics quote with approbation. For once I choose to be in a very prosaic and unimaginative vein, that I may not be seduced by my admiration for the poetic gift of the writer, but show how really fallacious all these fine passages are in comparison to the plain, strong statements of facts which oil and water-colour painters give us, and how the art of word-painting hides its own inherent weakness behind a rich embroidery of metaphor and simile which it has never confidence enough to cast aside.

Ruskin speaks of the "perturbed spirit" and "unwearied rage" of waves (30). Now waves are quite unconscious things, and have no spirit to be disturbed nor nervous system to be enraged. A painter would

have expressed the plain facts of form and motion, so far as the limits of his art would have allowed him, but not attributed fictitious passions to inanimate masses of mere salt water. And in 32 we are told that an Alpine cliff is troubled with "eternal sadness," the cliff not being capable of feeling either sadness or satisfaction, any more than a geological specimen in a museum. The allusions to its "melancholy of ruin," "might of endurance," and "foreboding of danger," in the same passage, are alike fallacious so far as the feelings of the cliff are concerned, because it does not signify in the least to the cliff whether it is a young highly prosperous cliff, or an unlucky old ruinous cliff; and as to its endurance, it endures nothing because it feels nothing, and there is more real endurance in one narrow sick bed in a London hospital in one hour, than there has been in all the cliffs in Switzerland and Savoy during the few thousands or millions of years they may have existed. Again, of the cliff in extract 33, we are told that it is "patient and victorious." It is *not* patient at all, for "patient" means *suffering*, and the cliff does not suffer in the least, it is as insensible as a corpse. We talk of the patience of a sick person whilst he is yet alive, and suffers uncomplainingly; but who talks of the patience of a dead body? And then we are told that this cliff seems "partly to rebuke, and partly to guard, and partly to calm and chasten the agitations of the feeble human soul that watches it," the real fact being that the cliff, in this respect unlike its admirer, Mr. Ruskin, has no notion of rebuking or lecturing anybody, nor any idea of giving moral lessons to mankind.

The vibration of the bridge in 34 is called "shuddering," to give a human feeling to the bridge, which it does not in reality possess ; for if its key-stones were knocked out by a cannon-ball, it would fall into the depth below without the slightest sensation of fear or any other mental emotion. Then the ferns "fear the light," whereas ferns are no more timorous than rocks or trees, only they grow best in damp places, which are often gloomy.

Then, in 35, Mr. Ruskin tells us that the pine-trees "stand in quiet multitudes, as troops of ghosts standing on the walls of Hades, not knowing each other—dumb for ever." Why, do oak-trees in a gentleman's park know each other, and are they in the habit of talking, anywhere but in Tennyson ? Then we are told that we "cannot reach them, *cannot cry to them*," that they "*never heard human voice*." Only imagine what fools we should be if we *were* to call out to a clump of trees ! And where are the trees that *have* heard people talk, since it is said of these, as a melancholy and exceptional circumstance, due to their too elevated situation, that "they never heard human voice ?" Have trees ears ? Do they *really* hear us ? Alas ! then, for the nonsense they have to endure when lovers sit beneath their shade ! And then Mr. Ruskin tells us that these wonderful pine-trees have got "*such iron will !*" so that common deal timber possesses one of the highest mental attributes of man.

And of the lichens we are told that they are "creatures full of pity," that they "lay quiet finger on the trembling stones, to *teach them rest*;" the real truth being that lichens, having no nervous system nor sensorium, cannot feel the emotion of pity, nor any other emotion ; and

farther, that heavy stones are not much in the habit of trembling, except in the immediate vicinity of volcanoes, and can rest perfectly well, when they are let alone, without any lichens to teach them.

Now I consider these pretty fallacies all but inevitable in word-painting. The use and purpose of them is to convey to the reader an impression of the energetic manifestation of creative feeling and intelligence displayed in things which are themselves destitute of both feeling and intelligence, and this is done by falsely attributing some degree of purely human feeling to these things. A painter in oil avoids this falsity by simply representing the *true* life of the natural object—that sort of quite unconscious, but still active life which belongs to clouds and waves, the quieter vegetable existence of trees, and that passive strength of slowly wasting substance which is the property of rocks and mountains. To the colour-painter the external universe is a great and elaborate work of Divine art, *in itself quite unconscious*, yet on which are recorded the infinite thoughts of the Master Spirit, some of which thoughts the painter endeavours to interpret, infusing into his interpretation the expression of his own worship and emotion. The word-painter, on the other hand, attributes human feelings to the inanimate objects of which the external universe is composed, and cannot express the *facts* he wants to express, nor his own personal emotion, without calling in the aid of this foolish and rather wearisome fallacy.

After speaking of this fallacy as it is exemplified in Mr. Ruskin's work, I ought to observe that it is common

to all good word-painting. I could not dispense with it myself. My poems are full of it, and my fallacies are not one whit less absurd than Mr. Ruskin's when coolly pulled to pieces in a matter-of-fact manner ; but when one has only got a dictionary full of words to paint with, it is necessary to resort to certain tricks and expedients. We have to attribute human feelings to all sorts of quite senseless things ; we have to ransack the whole earth, and even lay heaven and hell under contribution, to furnish us with fresh metaphors and similes ; and if at the end we can only make the reader imagine that he has received the *impression* we desire him to feel, we may consider ourselves successful.

I do not pretend to say that the art of colour-painting is quite strong enough to disdain artifice. On the contrary, it requires much craft and cunning if it is to produce any effect on the world ; but when Byron accused it of being "the most artificial and unnatural of all the arts," he was wrong. There is *one* art much more artificial and unnatural, an art he practised successfully himself, and with consummate artifice—the art, namely, of word-painting.

The peculiar powers and defects which distinguish word-painting from colour-painting appear to be briefly these :—

Words describe the emotions of the spectator better than the scene he sees.

They convey mental impressions, not material forms.

Colours convey material forms more accurately than mental emotions.

Words are quite incapable of rendering form and

colour in any but the very rudest way. They may, however, indicate great delicacy of perception in the person who uses them.

Colours, in skilful hands, may be made to render form and hue so very accurately, that to have seen a good topographical picture of a place is almost as good as having seen the place itself.

Words may be very vague and still quite intelligible. As, for instance, you may say "the church had a tower," without so much as specifying whether the church was built of brick or stone, in Gothic or classical architecture; whether it was large or small, old or new; whether the tower were tall or short, had a spire or not, &c. &c.

Colours, on the other hand, *must* be definite, or they would cease to be intelligible. In a coloured picture of a church the architecture must not only be stated, but worked out with some degree of detail, so that not only would the spectator be aware at once what the architecture and materials were, but he would receive an impression of a certain number of windows, &c.

Unless a word-picture is insufferably tedious, the facts conveyed by it will be very few.

A colour-picture will record innumerable facts without becoming tiresome at all.

A word-picture, if long, cannot be combined into one whole without a great intellectual effort on the part of the reader.

A colour-picture is combined into one whole by the artist, and the spectator cannot, if he would, see one part out of its relation to the other parts, whose influence it cannot escape.

Artists in words can reach more brilliant effects of light than artists in paint, because they recall the light of nature.

Artists in colour are bound down to dingy white lead.

Artists in words help themselves out by acoustic description; as, for instance, they add to the force of a storm at sea by telling of the roar of the wind, the canvass rattling like musketry, the thunder pealing, and the breakers dashing against the cliffs with a report as of cannon.

Colour art is silent.

Words may be true, because they go such a little way. It is quite true, for example, that Rouen Cathedral is a magnificent specimen of Gothic architecture.

But no picture of Rouen Cathedral ever was, or ever can be, so absolutely true as the above statement, because in all painting there must be innumerable little inaccuracies of detail, owing to the imperfection of human handiwork; and yet, in painting, this cannot be avoided, as in writing, by the total *omission* of detail, because in painting such omission is direct falsehood in itself.

The office of the word-painter is to get people to look at art and nature, to pierce through their dulness and indifference with earnest and powerful language.

The office of the colour-painter is to give an idea of beautiful natural scenes to people living at a distance from them.

I had not space in this Essay to compare the pictorial and literary novel. I had intended to take Hogarth's "Marriage à la mode" as an example of what may be

done in the pictorial novel on an elaborate scale, and Cruikshank's "Bottle" series as a pictorial tale. I should then have shown how far such works might be considered to contend with the literary novel in the delineation of character.

The subject of this Essay, if developed in all its branches, might very easily be made to fill a volume. For the sake of any reader who is interested enough in the matter to pursue it for himself, I will observe briefly :

That so far as the art of painting concerns itself with *man*, as a subject, it is undoubtedly inferior, and very far inferior, to written language.

For the art of painting renders the bodily shape and so much of mind as the body expresses, but language reveals the most secret thoughts.

Considered with reference to the body alone, painting is as superior to writing as it is in landscape.

But considered as interpretations of mental character, written narratives are quite incomparably superior to any possible series of pictures.

Hogarth's famous series is as meagre, in comparison to one of Fielding's novels, as a word-picture by Tennyson to a pre-Raphaelite landscape.

We know the persons by *sight*, which is an advantage the novelists do not give us ; but we know very little about them except their appearance.

People say that the character and history of each individual are written on his face, so that such pictures as Hogarth's ought to be as good a revelation of character as a novel by Thackeray.

Such an assertion as this betrays a total want of observation.

For, in ordinary life, does the aspect of a man, even when combined with the chief *visible* facts of his history, open for us his inner mind and life, and his secret history? Not in the least.

And are bodily appearances easy to interpret? I know an unlucky peasant who was endowed with a great red nose by Nature: he is one of the most abstemious men in England, yet enjoys the reputation of being a drunkard, merely because his nose is red. If Hogarth had put him in a picture, Mr. Sala, and other commentators, would have moralised on "the drunkard's" nose.

To compare word-painting and linear drawing in stories of human life it is only necessary to separate Thackeray's illustrations to "Vanity Fair" from the novel itself, and compare the two. The illustrations, without the novel, would hardly, I think, convey a very full or adequate idea of the characters.

Even Doyle's illustrations to "The Newcomes," which are much better, are weak in comparison to the words they illustrate. We could not guess the history and character of the Colonel merely from the pictures of him, still less Ethel's.

For the novelist has always this immense advantage over the painter, that he can make his characters utter their own sentiments, and report to us the very words they used.

The men and women that painters represent are all dumb.

Again, the novelist can narrate a connected series of

mental changes and circumstantial events, whose necessary development and final accomplishment may come about very gradually and slowly.

The painter, on the other hand, can only give us detached glimpses, each of one second of time.

This single-stroke effect, this concentration of the labour of months to realize the effect of a moment, and that upon a canvass which shall be comprehended at one glance—a power which, in landscape, gives the painter such an immense advantage over the writer with his tiresome *consecutiveness* of detail—happens to be just as great a disadvantage in the delineation of character, where the literary process of consecutive revelation, not instantaneous illumination, is the process exactly suited to the purpose.

In landscape and human physical form, nearly all the advantages lie with colour-painting.

In illustrations of human *character*, all the advantages are on the side of the writer.

For colours paint *things* best, but words convey *thoughts* best.

CHAPTER VI.

TRANSCENDENTALISM IN PAINTING.

THE connexion between the word "transcendental" as originally employed by Kant, and the same word as I employ it in the present chapter, may be briefly indicated before we consider the especial subject of the chapter itself.

Kant used the word to designate the class of ideas existing in the human mind independently of experience. Emerson calls all persons who rely on their own intuitions rather than on the experience of others, Transcendentalists. Transcendentalism in painting may be defined as the longing to realize artistic ideals hitherto existing only in the mind of the artist. Whether such an ideal is purely technical, as, for example, possible processes not hitherto employed; or artistic, in the restricted sense of compositions of an order for which there is no precedent; or scientific, as natural effects yet unrecorded, the transcendental tendency is to realize the dream and aspiration of the artist's own mind, rather than simply to reproduce the results of other people's experience.

The transcendental state of mind is therefore directly

opposed to the whole feeling of the ordinary practical intellect. The transcendentalist takes no interest in the merely doing over again what others have done before him, but kindles into enthusiasm with the exciting hope of realizing his own ideal. The practical man has no faith in intuitions ; does not believe in the possibility of anything not yet actually done, and restricts all his action to the safe and mechanical reproduction of such ideas of other men as he has already seen embodied in material forms. The two classes of men—idealists and materialists—are equally necessary to mankind, though necessary in very different proportions ; and neither of these two classes has any right to despise the other.

The transcendentalists think much, but usually produce little ; the materialists produce much, but do not, in the strict sense, *think* at all. The transcendentalists, however, are accustomed to maintain that by mere thinking they can increase their practical skill.

Thus it is said that Ole Bull, the celebrated Norwegian violinist, arrived at his most wonderful effects less by manual practice than meditation. He practised less, and thought more, than other violinists. This is quite in keeping with his reflections after hearing Paganini. Ole Bull actually sold his last shirt to hear that mighty master, and, having heard him, instead of saying like the crowd that nothing new was possible after that, began to seek after hitherto unknown effects that even Paganini had not discovered. Both these facts indicate clearly that Ole Bull was a musical transcendentalist, and his long retirement confirms it. A true transcendentalist

dislikes publicity, and loves to cultivate himself in solitude.

No man has ever reached commanding eminence without some touch of transcendentalism. Even in great conquerors this spirit lurks and works. Their discontent with the extent of their territorial dominion, and eager desire to enlarge it, correspond to a similar feeling in the philosopher with regard to the boundaries of present intelligence. Conquerors are, in fact, the visible types and examples of the intellectual conquerors, and Napoleon is never so grand and commanding a figure as on the Alpine snow. Every transcendentalist thrills with pleasure when he hears of that passage of the Alps; for he also would cross the mighty barriers that bar him from the golden fields.

The English mind does not welcome the transcendental philosophy, because it prefers that sort of intellectual repose which permits the most energetic and continuous labour. Politically, the French are transcendentalists, and the English not. The most practical minds have no love for this philosophy, because they instinctively perceive it to be a great hindrance to productiveness. It is impossible to produce so long as we only dream about what we ought to produce. This philosophy cannot become habitual either in nations or individuals without destroying productive energy. Its most salutary action is intermittent, by *epochs*. Transcendental epochs are necessary to progress, but they ought to leave us long intervals for hard, undoubting labour. Else all this fine philosophy would end in mere weak *wishing*, without the possibility of realization.

I have observed that in particular instances the abuse of this tendency of the intellect has resulted in a permanent state of intellectual lassitude and debility. It is, in fact, an abuse of the ideal, or imaginative faculty, and will naturally produce the same disastrous effects upon the mind that sensual excesses do upon the body. Habitual transcendentalists in thought are anything but transcendental in action. They surpass nobody; and by waiting all their lives long before deciding what to do are easily distanced by persons of less imaginative power, but greater practical force. So this philosophy is at the same time useful to a man's ambition, and dangerous to it. With regard to the arts, and especially that of painting, I intend here to point out the advantages of transcendentalism, and to indicate its peculiar dangers.

In all labours there are three stages—the mechanical, or imitative; the transcendental, or reflective; and the *intelligently* practical. I do not say, mind, that every labourer passes through all these stages. The vast majority stop at the first; a few reach the second; still fewer attain to the third.

It is obvious that to enter upon the second phase, that of reflection, a new order of faculties is needed. Every human being possesses in a greater or less degree the faculty of imitation, or the tendency to do what he has seen other people do. But the sceptical or examining faculty, that which *looks* (σκέπτομαι), is rarer, and it is this power which leads men into the second or reflective phase. And, difficult as it may be to enter this transcendental region, it is yet more difficult to pass through it,

out on the other side, into the third phase, the intelligently practical.

The men who remain always in the imitative stage are useful to society as copyists and reproducers of other men's thoughts. The men who get on as far as the second or reflective stage, and stop short there, are of no good to anybody that I see, except as a warning, and for their continual protest against low standards of criticism, and their dissatisfaction with all imperfect and inadequate performance. But persons who have reached the third phase, and are not only reflective but practical, usually achieve worthy results. They attain to the highest mark their several natures are capable of reaching. They are the best and swiftest workers. Henceforth they lose no time. Knowing the limits of art, they do not expect impossibilities. No unforeseen difficulty arrests them. Having learned from the transcendental philosophy the inadequacy of all means, and yet the exact degrees of utility and availableness of every material aid, and having lost the childish expectation of too great and too immediate results ; having learned the limits of their own powers, and ascertained by reflection what objects they ought to strive for, these transcendentalists, when they *do* become practical, are the most intensely practical of men.

In our art an intelligent critic would easily point out the transcendentalists. The prince of them all is Leonardo. I have not at hand his *Trattato della Pittura*; but in Rio's life of him there is a passage very much to our purpose which is founded on that treatise. "Pour lui, le peintre dont les connaissances ne vont pas au-delà

de son ouvrage, et qui a le malheur d'être content de lui-même, est un homme qui a manqué sa vocation ; au contraire, celui qui n'est jamais satisfait de son œuvre, a toutes les chances de devenir un excellent ouvrier. Il est vrai qu'il produira peu ; mais tout ce qu'il produira sera admirable et attrayant." This dissatisfaction with their own work is one of the most striking characteristics of the transcendentalists. Rio speaks elsewhere of "cet incurable mécontentement de soi-même qui le tourmentait sans relâche et le forçait à refaire ou à retoucher vingt fois la même chose." Ludovico Dolci, in his *Dialogue on Painting*, represents Leonardo as "a sublime genius, *always discontented with his own works.*" Again, Leonardo used to say that theory was the general, and practice the soldiers, thereby attributing a degree of importance to theory, which, though perfectly just, would never have been accorded by any merely practical person. Again, his strong, and in some respects unfortunate, tendency to extend the boundaries of his activity, was quite transcendental. He was always seeking new realms. His French biographer thus alludes to this disposition: "Cette disposition à étendre plutôt qu'à affermir ses conquêtes intellectuelles, s'était déjà manifestée chez lui dès son enfance, et ne le quitta plus pendant le cours de sa longue carrière, à laquelle manqua toujours l'unité de but, non par l'effet d'une application superficielle, mais par *la promptitude avec laquelle des horizons nouveaux s'ouvraient à son esprit.*" This continual opening of "new horizons" is the element of general progress contained in the transcendental philosophy, yet often disqualifies the individual for signal success in his especial vocation.

Leonardo, indeed, aided the progress of both science and art very appreciably, as I shall show in another place. With respect to his artistic faculty, Rio says : "On peut dire que, seul entre tous les artistes, par la force, la hauteur, et la souplesse de son génie, il s'éleva jusqu'à la synthèse de *l'idéalisme* et du *réalisme*." He made endless preparations before beginning a serious task, "préparatifs qui avaient pour unique but de satisfaire sa conscience d'artiste." In him the transcendental period does not appear to have been limited to certain years of youth, but rather to have alternated with his practical state at irregular intervals to the very close of life. Thus, nobody could ever be sure that he would execute a commission entrusted to him, because, even when amongst his multifarious occupations, he might have found time to do it, ten to one he would just happen to be in his ideal or transcendental state, with a settled conviction that all human labour was vanity, especially his own. Hence his great bronze statue, that was to have been, never got beyond the clay model. Italy waited ten years whilst Leonardo prepared his studies for this statue. He got it at length modelled in clay, and, instead of casting it in bronze immediately, thenceforth took no farther interest in the matter, so that the casting was delayed till Ludovico could not furnish the bronze on account of the war with France. Then the French soldiers came and amused themselves with shooting at the clay model, which they found convenient as a target; and thus this great and noble work, universally recognised by the Italians, during its brief existence, as the best of its kind in Italy, was lost for ever to the world. The

portrait of Mona Lisa was four years on Leonardo's easel. Vasari says: "After loitering over it for four years, he finally left it unfinished." His Adoration of the Magi in the Uffizj is unfinished. In his Last Supper, at Milan, the head of Christ was never finished, from incapacity on the part of the artist to realize his too lofty ideal. It is related that the Prior of the monastery where Leonardo painted this work "could in no way comprehend wherefore the artist should sometimes remain half a day together absorbed in thought before his work without making any progress that he could see. This seemed to him a strange waste of time, and he would fain have had him work away as he could make the men do who were digging in his garden, never laying the pencil out of his hand." The Prior complained of Leonardo's idleness to the Duke. Leonardo condescended to explain to the Duke, "that men of genius are sometimes producing most when they seem to be labouring least, their minds being occupied in the elucidation of their ideas, and in the completion of those conceptions to which they afterwards give form and expression with the hand." And with reference to the slow progress of the equestrian statue, Vasari says: "There is good reason to believe that the very greatness of his most exalted mind, aiming at more than could be effected, was itself an impediment; perpetually seeking to add excellence to excellence, and perfection to perfection." Some Servite monks, who gave a commission to Leonardo, wishing him to get on with it, conceived the hospitable, but somewhat imprudent idea of lodging him and all his household, supplying the expenses of the whole. But

he kept them waiting a long time, and made no beginning. "At length, however," says Vasari, "he prepared a cartoon." Piero Soderini paid Leonardo every month whilst he worked for him, but Leonardo *did not complete the work*, and so honourably offered to return the money received. "It is related," says Vasari, "that Leonardo, having received a commission for a certain picture from Pope Leo, immediately began to distil oils and herbs for the varnish, whereupon the Pontiff remarked: 'Alas! the while, this man will assuredly do nothing at all, since he is thinking of the end before he has made a beginning to his work.'" There seems to have been amongst Leonardo's customers, a very general conviction that he was not to be relied upon. Vasari, in a general observation on this characteristic, gives a sufficient reason for it: "Leonardo, with his profound intelligence of art, commenced various undertakings, many of which he never completed, because it appeared to him that the hand could never give its due perfection to the object or purpose which he had in his thoughts, or beheld in his imagination." In short, he was a transcendentalist, too strongly imbued with that philosophy for sustained action, yet far from being quite paralysed by it, or we should probably never have heard of him. His habit of seeking for discoveries, even in the most ridiculous trifles, his endless longing after the unknown, and his aspirations towards unattainable perfection, are so many signs and symptoms of transcendentalism. He tells the Duke Ludovico il Mauro that the difference between himself and the other military engineers of his day is, that their warlike instruments do not differ from those in common

use, whereas he has discovered secrets. I think it much to be regretted that these tendencies should have possessed Leonardo all his life. Up to thirty, he might have learned the doctrines of this exacting and imperious philosophy; but at that age he was already great enough to have quitted her schools. What a long life he lived! and how richly he was gifted! and what a poor, inadequate result he has left in comparison with his astonishing powers and his length of days! A faded fresco on a broken plaster wall, a few fair canvasses, a treatise or two, and one short philosophical poem! He made some wonderful guesses and discoveries, and achieved a colossal fame; but so long as his immortal name shall be remembered by men, it can never be meditated on otherwise than mournfully. O splendid Leonardo! the many-sided; a narrower nature might have yielded more abundant fruit! It is enough to make one hate all transcendental philosophers to think that so mighty a genius was all but lost to our art, because he would play with their most benumbing and paralysing torpedo of a philosophy.

It is odd that the realists should be more disposed to transcendentalism than what are called the idealists; but this seeming anomaly may be thus accounted for:—The realist compares his work continually with nature, whereas the traditional idealist merely obeys certain prescribed rules. Leonardo, the most transcendental of painters, was so loyal to Nature as to assert that she alone was the mistress of superior intellects. And you will always find that the most intense realists in our art are the most exposed to the seductions of the transcen-

dental philosophy ; for their endless striving after nature is a perpetual discouragement, and their best success seems to them but failure.

Therefore, it is likely that this philosophy has never had so many votaries in our art as now, when the victory of the realist schools of Europe may be looked upon as at last assured. Every other young painter in England is a transcendentalist. There is small hope for those who do not pass through this phase of intellectual experience.

This does not affect the truth of what I have just stated at the beginning of this chapter respecting the *general* rarity of transcendentalists. What I said was this:

“In all labours there are three stages—the mechanical, or imitative ; the transcendental, or reflective ; and the *intelligently* practical. I do not say, mind, that every labourer passes through all these stages. The vast majority stop at the first ; a few reach the second ; still fewer attain to the third.”

I spoke, you perceive, of *all* labours, not of ours alone. Now, if you take the mass of human occupations, you will find that the most part are favourable rather to the imitative than to the reflective man. In most trades reflection and discovery are superfluous, generally positively injurious to the pocket. In the manufacturing districts, where, I suppose, there is as much successful energy and ability as you will readily find anywhere, the atmosphere is by no means favourable to transcendentalism. Cotton manufacturers with an ideal turn usually ruin themselves by the premature adoption of new, and as yet imperfect inventions, and a want of steadiness in their habits of business. If Leonardo had lived in Roch-

dale forty years ago, he would have contributed very excellent inventions to the cotton manufacture ; but he could never have profitably worked a mill. Cotton spinners who take to studious and meditative habits usually awake from their reveries to find themselves in the *Gazette*. And so in other active and busy trades. If you pause too much to reflect, you are ruined. And, after all, if you can turn out as good twist as your neighbours, at as low a figure, I see no reason why you should bother yourself about inventions, as poor Samuel Crompton did. In trade, invention may occasionally lead to fortune, but as a general rule mere industry is safer. This is so commonly understood by the more prudent tradesmen, that they rest contentedly in the traditional or imitative stage, leaving the poor geniuses to improve upon their instruments and machines.

But in our art the conditions are entirely reversed. A painter who is a realist, does not merely compare his paint with his neighbour's paint—is not satisfied merely because he can turn out as good an article at as low a figure as the rest of his trade—but, on the contrary, is always comparing it with appearances in Nature, which are quite other than paint, and with which all rivalry is hopeless. The bitter and discouraging lessons that this continual comparison forces upon him, are to an intelligent young painter nothing less than an elementary course of transcendental philosophy ; and after learning a while in this terrible school, there is no telling what will become of him. His future fate, circumstances and his own degree of strength must determine. He will either lapse into

inactivity and despair, in which case a speedy and total change of profession is the best thing to be hoped for him, or he will get through his transcendentalism as a child gets through its teething, having thereby gained new instruments for the acquisition of stronger nourishment.

A great deal of the present prevalence of this philosophy is due to Mr. Ruskin and the pre-Raphaelites. Mr. Ruskin is almost as transcendental as Leonardo. And here let me observe, in passing, that although the transcendentalists are slow and unreliable as workmen, so that when they begin anything there is no telling whether they will ever finish it, they are yet the best and most stimulating of critics. Emerson, in his Lecture on the Transcendentalists, thus describes their critical tendency. He speaks of "the extravagant demand they make on human nature. That, indeed, constitutes a new feature in their portrait, that they are the most exacting and extortionate critics. Their quarrel with every man they meet, is not with his kind, but with his degree. There is not enough of him—that is the only fault. They prolong the privilege of childhood in this wise, of doing nothing,—but making immense demands on all the gladiators in the lists of action and fame." No critic ever answered so precisely to this description as Ruskin does. The immense service he has rendered to our art has been by unceasing and importunate demanding. He has never enough of good things. He is possessed with so insatiable a hunger and thirst for all that is excellent in art, that a thousand artists toil from year to year without satisfying him. One might give a list of the

things he has asked for, and got, and yet he is still asking. Let him ask! for to demand, and exact, and stimulate to nobler and sterner aims, are his office and mission upon earth. Mr. Brett gave him chalk hills, and he asked for the Val d'Aosta—the Val d'Aosta was accordingly mirrored for him with a marvellous fidelity, and then he wanted more of soul than the mirror gave. Once he wanted apple-blossoms, and suddenly at his word the walls of the Academy blossomed like an orchard. This drew from him the observation that the greatest men did not like flowers, so the flowers faded away from Trafalgar Square.

In Mr. Ruskin's own work, the transcendental habits of Leonardo are frequently betrayed. His long and careful collecting of materials—the extent of his range, including architecture and painting as the most prominent subjects, with politics and theology and literary criticism filling up the background, occasionally to the detriment of the matter in hand; his absolute want of method and self-direction, leading him in his best works to give us all sorts of disquisitions having nothing whatever to do with the subjects of the chapters where they occur; his constant study of Nature and ceaseless reference to her as the only authority; his contempt for tradition, and, as an artist, his exquisite refinement and delicacy of hand, to be acquired only by the severest self-criticism—all these things are so many marks and symptoms by which I know him for a transcendentalist.

And the effect Mr. Ruskin has had on our art, may be generally described in this manner—namely, that he has inoculated all our younger painters with more or

less of his own transcendental tendencies. All the best painters now alive in England are striving with all their might, either to paint what no one else ever painted before, or, if their subjects are old ones, to treat them more truly than they ever were treated before. Our English School is in a state of intense aspiration after hitherto unattained perfections, a state of the general mind sure to breed transcendentalists by hundreds. And so we have plenty of them of both sorts, the active and inactive.

I think as Mr. Ruskin is the best example of a critical transcendentalist I could find amongst writers on art, so Mr. Holman Hunt is the most illustrious example of a transcendentalist in action. The whole pre-Raphaelite movement is, indeed, a result and embodiment of this philosophy. The boundless confidence of these painters in convictions which had but slight support at first beyond the limits of their own consciousness, their decisive preference of internal to external guides—their firm reliance on principles rather than persons—their courage and obstinacy in opposition—their laborious obedience to the idea which impelled them beyond the sympathies of the hour—all these things indicate a transcendental rather than a materialistic state. And Mr. Hunt himself, as slow and reflective, as thoughtful and as fastidious as Leonardo, only more concentrated, is the most perfect example of active transcendentalism in our art, and the “Christ in the Temple” its noblest result. Fortunately for England, Mr. Hunt is not also by profession a military and civil engineer, so that his pictures may have a fair chance of being finished.

But strong and gifted must that painter be who, with a judgment so severe and exacting, does yet attempt to realize his conceptions in so imperfect a material as paint. To most people, when once their ideal rises to a certain height, thenceforth all execution seems vanity. How many young painters have I seen in the Slough of Despond, lost in the wild, hopeless dream of the transcendentalist, longing after impossible perfections. It is not so to the same extent in any other art, because no other human labour suggests comparisons so discouraging. A musician, for instance, may sing to an audience which is not just fresh from a chorus of angels. A poet has to contend against no superhuman rivalry. Even a sculptor enters into no hopeless contest with nature, for he does not attempt colour and light, the two unattainable things, but confines himself to form alone, which is quite accurately imitable. But the painter is always in the presence of another Painter, with whom all rivalry is hopeless; and the traveller comes to his dingy canvasses with eyes still dazzled by the glitter of the glacier and the splendour of the sea.

And thus in our art transcendentalism is peculiarly fatal to productiveness. Let a young painter resolve that he will paint entire verity—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—and he may as well burn palette and brushes at once. The utmost we can hope for is to be as true as the nature of our means and materials will permit—a vast concession to falsity. But these limitations of materials are intolerable to the ardent aspirant. He sees so vividly, and feels so strongly, that he will never endure to complete any of his attempts.

He feels them to be, at the best, mockeries and make-shifts. He finds it impossible to express himself in paint. He will try language, perhaps, and write poems, because the poem does not pretend to imitate, only to celebrate, the beauty of the universe. Or, if he has courage enough to stick to painting, he will push imitation to its utmost limit, like Leonardo, and Hunt, and Millais, to discover, after all, that art is less an imitation than an interpretation of nature.

Like most of my contemporaries, I have passed through a long period of transcendentalism. That it has not paralysed my productiveness altogether, I look upon as a piece of extraordinary good fortune. Perhaps if I relate something of my personal experience in this place, it may be of use to others, and save them a great deal of valuable time, which I, unhappily, have lost.

At first, painting was very pleasant; the reader will remember Hood's capital little poem about *his* artistic beginnings. I began by sketching from nature, as most artists did at that time, and working up these sketches into little conventional water-colour vignettes in the study, with now and then an oil-picture. All this was very delightful, for, as yet, I had no idea of pushing the imitation of nature to a point where it might become seriously inconvenient. It is very agreeable to "sketch" indolently from Nature so long as you can rest complacently satisfied with bad and imperfect work, as the landscape-painters of the old school used to do, and as dilettants do yet.

But one day I planted myself on an island in Windermere, with a box of oil-colours by my side, determined

to paint from nature. Two hours of this work disenchanted me. I found the old conventionalism quite inadequate, and went to work in the studio of one of our modern landscape-painters.

In the interval I had made a very important purchase. I had bought the first volume of "Modern Painters."

After a course of discipline in a London studio, I went to work from nature again; but no longer, this time, in the old happy, contented spirit. I was destined to pass through long years of painful study and reflection, before ever again I might have one gleam of pleasure in any work of mine.

I perceive now, on unfolding a roll of canvasses belonging to that epoch, that I was trying for incompatible qualities. I was continually trying for bright sunshine, and yet could not bear to sacrifice the least atom of colour. I tried to paint impossible subjects, and was disappointed because they did not come right.

Finding paint unsatisfactory as a means of expression, I took to *writing from nature* in verse. That was because the conditions of poetry did not seem to demand *imitative* truth. I did not then perceive that no art is ever required to perform more than its nature will permit, and that if I had been contented with such a degree of truth as the palette and brushes were capable of rendering, I should have found it, in the end, fuller and more adequate than anything that mere words could convey. The landscape of my poem, "The Isles of Loch Awe," was all studied from nature on the spot, as carefully as a pre-Raphaelite background. The other poems in the same volume are full of bits of landscape, also done

from nature. One of our sincerest pre-Raphaelite painters told me that I had exactly done in poetry what they had been all along doing in painting. Indeed, I had worked on the same principles, though in another art.

But I had not abandoned painting; nor, indeed, had I ever diverged very far from it. I was continually looking at nature, and taking memoranda of effects, either in words or with the pencil; and, occasionally, a severe study of form. But I had no pleasure in painting. The best that I could do in oil-colour seemed to me so inadequate as to be scarcely worth the doing at all, and what other men did appeared, for the most part, a painful drudgery, ending in very doubtful and imperfect results.

This would have been an immense misfortune to me if it had not been accompanied all the time by a ceaseless watching of nature, and laborious analysis of art. I certainly made more progress in these apparently idle years, than if I had been actively employed in doing merely conventional work, and acquiring a false facility. I had one object in view, of which I never lost sight for an hour. I wished to ascertain, in a manner really satisfactory to myself, the best and wisest way in which our art could be pursued, so as to lead to the highest excellence.

Much of this hesitation was due, no doubt, to Mr. Ruskin. It is one of the good results of all original books, to set everybody thinking. If I had never read "*Modern Painters*," I should have done more and thought less. But all the most fruitful action in the world is preceded by prolonged meditation, and generally in proportion to the strength and fecundity of the action

is the duration and intensity of the preparatory thought. No question relating to my art can henceforth cost me any farther practical hesitation or embarrassment, because I have weighed them all one by one, and arrived at conclusions on each of them, which, if not absolutely irrefragable, are useful, provisionally, as a remedy against the evils of a too prolonged state of indecision. And this thinking out hitherto unsolved problems is by no means a light labour, especially when the action of all one's life must depend on their solution. It wearies far more than work ; and for me, who could not decide after hearing only one side of the question, these perplexities involved much of such thinking before I could come to any satisfactory decision.

I have found amongst my papers a curious memento of this doubting and transcendental state. It is a letter addressed to one of my friends, but never posted. It was written in the Highlands, at an early period of my camp life there, when I was painting from nature, and had not as yet formed my system of study.

“ Shall I confess to you that, amongst the many beneficial results of this continual study of nature, I find one result which is not practically beneficial ? I am fast verging into a state of thought concerning art which is to the last degree transcendental, and not practical. At the same time, I feel that this present condition is temporary, and continue to hope that it may lead ultimately in a right direction.

“ I believe that whoever puts himself face to face with Nature, with the stern resolution to penetrate her meaning, before he dies will have to pass through an epoch of

trials, not less severe in their way than the temptations of the old legendary hermits in *their* wildernesses. As for me, never poor hermit was so tempted before. There is nothing to be feared from the hostile tone of the noble friend whose opinions I detailed to you in my last (see Chap. XVI. Vol. I. 'Friends in the Desert'); the true danger is from an invisible demon, who, far from being ignorant either of art or nature, understands both only too profoundly, and whose eloquence is of that persuasive kind which, however false in its conclusions, argues from incontrovertible premises. Here is the last of his long orations. I would shut my ears against them if I could, but some glamour is laid on me, and I cannot choose but hear.

“ Thus whispered the demon :—‘ Of what slight value must always be any attempt to copy nature faithfully in such a material as paint ! The success even of the most famous artists is most ignominious failure. As for you, my friend, and the school you belong to, in spite of all your pretensions to truth, you know perfectly well that the truth can never be told in paint, and that your best truth is falsehood. For instance : you are pretending to paint that green field before you, and the intense gloom of the mountain beyond. It is a dull day ; so much the better for you, since there is no sunshine to baffle you altogether at the outset. But if you think you can get the brightness of a common green field in dull daylight upon any canvass whatever in the ordinary light of a picture gallery, you are wondrously in error. Such light as there ever is on the walls of the Royal Academy, cannot raise the purest flake-white itself up to the pitch

of that dull green before you ; and a gleam of real sunshine would be as much beyond the reach of your powers as the creation of a planet. And then, your gloom ! There is no such thing as gloom to be got in a picture at all, for even ivory black in any daylight strong enough to allow of a picture being visible, would rise instantly to a grey, which would show as light against a gloomy mountain in summer midnight, as white gloves against a dress coat at the opera. Wherefore, since you can neither get the light of Nature, nor her gloom, nor anything like either one or the other, what's the use of trying for *effect* at all ? And suppose you abandon all attempt at effect, and content yourself with the simple imitation of bunches of heather, and bits of stone, and scraps of ivy, or blackberry-bush, do you think your defeat less certain ? True, you will go farther ; but you will be as certainly defeated in the end. You moderns, in aiming at the accurate imitation of nature, propose to yourselves what is impossible. You will never imitate one square yard of green grass, nor one little grove of fern.

“ ‘ Again ; suppose you turn idealist, and try to paint your impressions ; what is the value of such impressions ? If they are like nature at all, it is probable that they would have been much more like nature if carefully studied on the spot ; and if they are not like nature, is it not probable that they will be very inferior to nature ? For instance, take Turner's “ Kilchurn.” Which of the two do you like best ? the noble, melancholy reality, with its tall keep, and its thick ivy, and its round towers at the angles ; or Turner's ideal of it, which misses entirely every single point on which the power and

expression of the whole edifice depend? Would you like to be "ideal" after this fashion? Can this kind of idealism coexist with any sincere affection for nature? Would Turner have so libelled Kilchurn if he had loved it? Not so. And again; what character is more marked in the Tower of London than its massive breadth and solidity, the vast area of its base in proportion to its height, giving it the stern aspect of a tyrannous longevity, like a strong old gaoler of the state, who will patiently live out whole generations of prisoners. *That* is what the Tower of London says for itself: "I am strong and mighty yet in my old age; my foundations are broad and deep; I hold for ever my place by the shore of the black river, which has brought me so many victims in the days of the feudal kings. Nor will I stir before the march of your modern civilization; but will hold my place here, where I stand, and will guard within me the grim relics of the great days of old—hatchet, and block, and thumb-screw, and all instruments of torture; and the empty suits of armour that the noble barons wore!" For this strong and terrible old oppressor, what has Turner given you? A pale, elongated phantom, like a youth dying of consumption; every indication of strength and power carefully avoided, and replaced by precisely opposite qualities; namely, much delicacy and effeminacy. Again; would you like to be "ideal" after this fashion? And still less, I suppose, is the old conventionalism of Salvator, and Claude, and Poussin, the object of your ambition. After studying nature thus earnestly day and night, you are scarcely in a fit condition to go to school and listen reverently to precepts of the Sir George Beaumont kind;

you are not likely to obey with patience the commands of the connoisseur, who must have his brown tree, and his first, second, and third lights in every separate landscape that shall come from your hand.

“‘What are you aiming at, my good sir? What do you want to do? I think I read your ambition. Shall I tell you what I believe you have set your heart on?

“‘You love these lakes and mountains and old castles as if they were your dearest relations and friends, and so, merely because you love them, you want to paint their portraits, just as when you were a little boy in petticoats you were continually trying to draw likenesses of the good lady who fulfilled the office of a mother to you. Did you succeed in fixing on paper those beloved features? Are you likely to succeed much better with these dear hills and waters that you have climbed or sailed upon so often? I warn you that you will *not* succeed. It is not probable that you will even realize your impressions to a degree satisfactory to yourself, but then it is still less probable that you will succeed in conveying them to others. And your precious truths of nature, that you take such infinite trouble to secure, who cares for them? who on earth will ever thank you for them? For instance, you have seen the calm surface of this lake designed all over with a thousand delicate curved figures by as many light breathings of the air, infinitely too light to be called breezes. Go and paint those figures on the water, study their forms accurately, and paint them just as you saw them. Then show your picture to a connoisseur, and see whether you will ever be able to make him believe that the wind can blow a

hundred ways at once, and that it can draw shapes of such exquisite delicacy on the calm water, with curves as sharp and subtle as ever skater cut in clear ice. In the month of May are to be seen, high up on the mountains, odd patches of white with bold strange outlines; paint them, but let me warn you that every such patch you put on your picture will reduce its value in the market. No cockney will ever believe you when you tell him that snow lies in such queer, unimaginable forms. Remember how the cockney tourists, when they saw the snow on Ben Loy in nature itself, laughed at Malcolm when he told them what it was. On many a calm evening in summer you may see a flaming sunset sky reproduced with scarcely inferior splendour in the waters below till the calm lake looks like a great pool of blood. Paint *that*, and the people will pass your picture disdainfully, and say, "Water is blue, and not red." Remember how, in a society of literary men in London, you once heard a wise gentleman holding forth on Turner, and condemning him in these very words, "No one can ever make me admire an artist who knows so little of nature as to *paint water red* and trees blue." And if the most cultivated society in England is not sufficiently advanced to know that smooth water reflects colour, what can you hope from the general public? Don't you see that you are always aiming at delicate truths that nobody will thank you for, and which will be so many hindrances to you when you have got hold of them? All the public wants is this, that trees be green and water blue; that hills come dark against the sky, that clouds hang white in its blue dome, and that the

sheep stand out white from the green fields ; and, above all, that things “ stand out from the canvass,” as they say. So what’s the use of breaking your heart over subtle truths that nobody wants ? Daub away if you like daubing, and aim at stereoscopic relief ; that’s what the people want, and the way to attain it is not difficult ; you have only to give up all your delicate truths, represent only those things which are most easily imitable and nearest to the spectator, dividing yards of foreground by aërial distances true only of miles, and then, my good sir, you shall earn gold.

“ ‘ But you will not consent to that. There is a little impediment in your nature which will never allow you to consent to this drudgery. You fancy you are a painter. Not you. A true painter loves colours and brushes and canvasses more than a child loves its first shilling box of paints, whereas you hate paint in itself, and only like it a little as it begins to resemble something else than paint. You are an acute observer of Nature, I grant you that ; but a painter ! not in the least. You love Nature far too well to endure to make caricatures of her ; and in comparison with your bright dream all flake white, and Naples yellow, and ultramarine, and Indian red are the grossest clay and dirt.’ ”

The state of feeling commemorated in the foregoing paragraphs may very easily, as the reader will perceive, put a stop to a painter’s productiveness. I can fancy it very possible that, from an excessive love for Nature, an artist holding such views might altogether abandon art. And if I did not abandon it ‘ myself, it was rather, perhaps, because I could not endure to give up a pursuit

which still attracted me by the continual stimulus of difficulties to be conquered, than because I saw reason to expect any great pleasure when the most obvious of them should at length have been surmounted.

Now, however, this period of transcendentalism is far enough behind me. I have come to take pleasure again in my art, and that fully and intensely. Even the hateful materials, the dirty oils, and earths, and minerals, have become pleasant and friendly once more since I have learned the precious services they can all render. But I ask from them no more than they are capable of yielding. I have come to understand that flake white is not, and cannot be, moon-splendour, that Naples yellow is not sun-fire, nor vermilion cloud-flame. Nature seems to me more glorious than ever; but I have learned to respect her magnificence instead of wishing to mimic it. And art, which formerly seemed so unworthy a mockery, has risen to the rank of an intellectual interpretation.

The effect of this change of feeling on my practice has been immense. I no longer consider it to be within the circle of my duties to attempt impossibilities. After having given much care and thought to ascertain the limitations of art, I work contentedly within them. It seems to me now that Nature is great, but that art is also great.

I have awakened from my transcendental dream with a huge appetite for natural facts. And this appetite grows by what it feeds upon, for the more memoranda I get the more I want to get. I find also a new and delightful interest in the technicalities of the art itself. I am never tired of talking with great workmen about their

methods of work, and their peculiar experience of such and such a colour or combination. But, what is pleasantest of all, I even begin to feel some happiness and satisfaction in my own work, which I used formerly to loathe and hate. It seems to me at last that I see my way before me, difficult and laborious, yet not impassable, and leading to untrodden heights.

And when I ask myself what good I have gained to compensate for the weariness of the transcendental philosophy, I find that this philosophy has yielded me some solid and indispensable conclusions not otherwise so fully attainable. That passionate seeking has led to passionate finding. I could never have acted with such decision now, if I had not been so undecided then.

Yes, transcendentalism is a great school for a man who is in earnest. It is better as a preparation for great action than the meaner sort of practical apprenticeship. For the transcendental philosophy teaches us to examine all things before we use them, and to ascertain the nature and purpose of every instrument before we attempt to employ it. This philosophy abolishes hurry, and gathers endless lessons from our first failures. A student who is a transcendentalist makes vast progress in comparison to the little practical work he does, because his intellectual state is one of active and intense observation, carried down to the minutest details. And if the student can only avoid in time the peculiarly benumbing effect upon the will of too prolonged a sojourn in this school, he will leave its quiet garden of meditation, full of ardour for the brightest fields of action.

CHAPTER VII.*

PAINTING AS A POLITE AMUSEMENT.

AMONGST the visitors to my camp at Loch Awe was the distinguished dilettant Gulielmus Augustus Chipps, a gentleman descended from the noble house of De Blockke. In his early youth, being at a provincial academy where noblemen and gentlemen of tender years are prepared for the public schools, Master Chipps had a conversation with one of his schoolfellows concerning the

* This chapter, though true, is not terse enough to leave a very clear impression of my precise views on the mind of the reader. I therefore state them here in a few brief sentences.

1. Dilettantism, as I understand it, has not necessarily anything to do with the money distinction. A man may sell his pictures and be no artist ; or he may not sell his pictures and yet be a true artist. I have, therefore, nothing to do with the vulgar social classification of "amateur" and "artist." The noble title of ARTIST, like that of *poet*, is, in my conception, a great intellectual dignity, quite independent of all money matters. Thus, Byron was an artist, though he sold his copyrights, and Shelley was an artist, though he could not sell his : on the other hand, Ruskin is an artist, though he does not sell his drawings, and hundreds of professional painters are *not* artists, though they sell their pictures.

2. The distinction between mere dilettants and real artists is this :—Dilettants *amuse* themselves, artists *discipline* themselves. The essence of dilettantism is PLAY, and the essence of art is WORK. It is impossible to conceive of two states of mind more completely opposed than these.

3. The consequence of this opposition is, that people who paint for amusement and not for discipline can never rise to any sympathy with, or comprehension of, true artists. Even hard-working lawyers and cotton manufacturers are nearer to a conception of the noble artist-nature, than

study of the fine arts and their now acknowledged importance as a branch of modern education.

“I say, Bill, what makes you learn drawing?”

“Why, don’t you twig? how green you are, Gull. Don’t you see that I miss my Greek every Tuesday and Thursday, for you fellows have always done with old Wall when we come back from Webb’s, and then, the night before a drawing day, when you fellows are working like blazes at construing, we’ve got nothing to do but exercise. Of course we sham work, and I’ve always my big Liddell and Scott close to me; but as soon as old Wall drops asleep or gets hold of a novel, I get one myself out of my pocket and study that.”

“By Jove, Bill, what a deep fish you are!”

“Why, you see, it’s easy enough work down there with old Webb. I’ve been drawing a race-horse this week,

idle dilettants ever can be. For workers generally understand workers to a certain extent, but it is impossible for any one to comprehend a great intellectual discipline like the study of art, who looks upon it in the light of a mere amusement.

4. The notion of “accomplishments,” or “*arts d’agrément*,” as it exists amongst educators, is utterly false and pernicious. Either these things are worth learning or they are not. If they are worth learning let them be really learned, but if they are *not* worth learning it is a great folly to waste any time upon them at all.

5. The prevalent impression that an “amateur” can learn art in a different way from an “artist” is a childish mistake. The laws of Nature, which are the basis of art, are just as difficult for rich men as for poor men. The conditions of success in art are precisely the same for the sons of kings and nobles as they are for the sons of barbers and dyers; and those conditions may be expressed in two words, TALENT and DISCIPLINE.

There is, however, a very obvious distinction between *such* art as is taught to dilettants by drawing-masters, and such art as real artists teach themselves—the difference, namely, that there is between a false bank-note and a real one. They look pretty much alike to careless observers, but the one has a definite value, and the other is utterly worthless.

and when I get into colours, which I shall do next half, it'll be better fun still. Then you know Webb always does the drawing after all, and so I've lots of capital things to take home with me at the holidays ; but I got into an awful mess with the governor at Christmas, because he would have me draw his old hunter, Sir Tatton ; for he said that I drew horses so well, and he would especially like a drawing of Sir Tatton by my hand ; and, upon my word, Gull, I could no more have drawn the old brute than I could have eaten him raw, so I told no end of lies about it, said I'd left all my pencils at school, and that I'd no paper, and that I'd write to Webb, so I put it off and off till the old governor got sulky and never asked me again."

The result of this conversation was the following letter from Gulielmus to his mother, the Hon. Mrs. Chipps :—

"DEAR MAMMA,

"I do so want to learn drawing. Five of our fellows learn it regularly twice a week. I have asked the Doctor if I may, and he says he has no objection. The drawing master is a Mr. Webb, who made such beautiful paintings of race-horses for Lord Doodle ; and if I learn drawing you know it would be so pleasant to make sketches during the holidays. I have often wished I could draw like you, and Fanny and I could sketch together in the holidays.

"I have not any more time, as the bell has rung. I remain, dear mamma, your affectionate son,

"GULIELMUS.

"P.S.—Uncle has not been this half, and he always

gives me a sovereign ; will you lend me a sovereign till he comes ? I will pay it you back."

This interesting epistle reached the Hon. Mrs. Chipps, in company with another from the Doctor, on the same subject, addressed to her husband :—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Gulielmus has asked me if he may learn drawing. As a general rule, we do not like our boys to waste their time in pursuits of so frivolous a nature, because they inevitably intrude to a certain extent upon their serious studies ; but in the case of your son a little harmless amusement of this kind is permissible, because he does his work well. So if the lad asks you if he may draw, even let him draw, and in due course of time daub like some others of his schoolfellows, if you feel inclined to give him your permission, for he has already asked mine and received it.

"I remain, my dear Sir,

"Yours very faithfully,

"JOHN BUSBY."

After the receipt of these letters, the following conversation took place at lunch between Mrs. Chipps and her husband, concerning their son's artistic studies and the fine arts in general.

"Do you know, Charles, I've got a note from Gulielmus, and there's another for you from Dr. Busby. Here they are."

"Well, as to this drawing, he may learn it I suppose,

if he will, but I should not like any such amusement to interfere with his studies. I've seen those race-horse pictures he talks of at Doodle's house in Yorkshire, and I suppose this Webb is as clever a fellow as most artists are."

"Well, but, dear, there is one objection. Some young gentlemen, with the prospects of Gulielmus, cause a great deal of trouble and mortification to their friends when they have a turn for painting and it is indulged ; and I have known one or two instances where sons of parents in a respectable position in life have even wished to become professional artists ; and if our dear Gulielmus has talent, which I think very probable, he might take some such fancy into his head too, which would be a great grief to me."

"Oh, nonsense, Henrietta ; no fear of that. Old Busby will take care Gulielmus doesn't draw enough to make an artist of himself. Perhaps he'll make a sketch of his mare at Christmas, or of his dog, or the house, perhaps, or a caricature of you, Hen, or of his governor, as he calls him, and that, I think, will be the limit of his ambition."

So Master Gulielmus went twice a week to the drawing-master's, and this is the way he learned to draw there.

Half a dozen young gentlemen are seated round a large mahogany dining-table. They are engaged in the pursuit of the fine arts. The two biggest pupils are brothers, who, for the last five years, have taken home regularly every Christmas and Midsummer a parcel of studies done with the blacklead pencil (on whose merits as an artistic tool Mr. Webb frequently expatiates). These studies are chiefly of landscapes and buildings,

and oh, how beautifully black and polished all the shading is! Mr. Webb says that Sinclair major shades quite perfectly, and that shading is the proof of talent, for anybody can learn to make outlines, but to shade well requires *genius*! These shadows of Sinclair's are black and bright. Sinclair uses blacklead almost as well as the servant girl who polishes the grates at home; but Sinclair's mamma thinks her son an accomplished genius, whereas she doesn't think the servant girl any genius at all, which seems to me very unfair. Sinclair's mamma also sees great improvement every year in her son's artistic efforts, though for the last four years he has remained quite stationary, having, in fact, attained perfection four years ago; and who can be expected to advance beyond *that*?

After the two Sinclairs comes young Dunn, a farmer's son of Yorkshire, and he is in water-colours. When he got his guinea box of paints, as he called it, how all the little boys at Dr. Busby's did envy and respect him! Now he copies cottages on very rough, thick paper, some of which will be framed for the drawing-room at the farm, whereof his school prizes, "The Vicar of Wakefield," by Oliver Goldsmith, and "A Selection from the British Poets," bound in morocco, with gilt edges, form the chief literary ornaments.

Dunn is not in the highest sense a colourist; I mean one would not class him with either of the two Hunts, nor Millais, nor Lewis, nor Linnell; but Webb says he is as remarkable in colour as the Sinclairs are in drawing, so Dunn blots on complacently, and uses extravagant quantities of moist water-colours, which

Mr. Webb sells him at an exceedingly handsome profit ; so all parties are satisfied, which is very delightful.

Pupil number four is our young friend, who, following in the steps of Sir Edwin Landseer, has devoted himself to the study of animals. This young gentleman is not rapid in his execution, and his labours would be as unproductive as Penelope's did not Mr. Webb kindly do the whole drawing for him at last.

But pupil number five is the most brilliant ornament of the whole academy. He has spent many hours, distributed over four years, at the rate of two hours to each week, in endeavouring to imitate those pretty French lithographs of heads, which may be bought for five shillings apiece at the print-seller's. Poor Harry Robinson ! the result of all this toil is of little value. He imitates without understanding the meretricious dash of the lithographer, and at a distance how immeasurable ! And Harry feels at last that there is something wrong in the system which has made him give so much labour for a result so worthless ; for it is easy to see, that if the print itself be only worth five shillings, Harry's wretched imitation of it is not worth the paper it is drawn upon, and the chalk that has been spread over it in many stumpings and hatchings ; not to speak of Harry's time, which would have been much better spent at cricket ; nor of the thirty pounds this accomplishment has cost Harry's father, which ought to have paid the grocer's bill ; for Harry is one of ten children, and his father a poor surgeon.

With these associates Gulielmus enters on the study of art, not from any interest in the art itself, but to

escape Xenophon or Virgil twice a week. He is set to copy very bad drawings mechanically, without any exercise of the intellect or even of the memory. Of natural law he is profoundly ignorant; so ignorant, as not even to be aware that the appearances of nature come under any definite laws whatever. Once or twice a month, in the summer time, Mr. Webb takes his pupils out to sketch from nature, and pretty work they make of it. The walk, however, does them good; and Gulielmus, with great good sense, prefers the study of nature to translating Xenophon.

Years afterwards Gulielmus is a confirmed practical amateur of the recognised gentlemanly sort. He is an officer now, and sometimes, between lunch and mess, will take a walk into the country, near his quarters, and make a sketch to give away. These sketches of his are of the feeblest; but, as he is careful to tell any stranger who may happen to find him at work, "he is only an amateur, who draws for his amusement"; as if there were any danger of his being mistaken for an artist. He says it is such a delightful amusement, the manufacture of those sketches! Alas! poor Gulielmus; one glimpse of the power of nature, or the faintest insight into the incalculable difficulty of art, would make those labours of his rather too humiliating to be delightful!

But he goes on with his sketching and other amusements till he marries and leaves the service. It is then that the amateur might be expected to develop his productiveness. But "Society" claims him, and he has as little time as ever. So he works on in his old way, and gets entangled with little artificial theories, that two lines

must never run parallel ; that trees must not, on any account, be allowed to form the letter V against the sky (for which most real trees, like old Mr. Weller, have, in their ignorance, a most unfortunate predilection) ; that green must never be painted green, but always brown ; that green and blue are discordant ; and that, in short, the Author of Nature showed very bad taste indeed, which the learned dilettant is to correct. Then Gulielmus gets quite a reputation amongst his friends, and his sketches are warmly admired by old ladies, who firmly believe their sham Titians to be authentic masterpieces, and could not distinguish the truest transcript of nature from the most impudently manufactured falsehood.

Men of strong common sense, however, usually despise these amateurs in secret, though polite society requires that their attempts should be spoken of courteously, and treated with a certain indulgence. So the male friends of Gulielmus, when his back was turned, used to pooh-pooh his elegant tastes, like barbarians, as they were, destitute of refined sentiments ; but they feared Gulielmus before the ladies, because he had the cant of connoisseurship, and could talk about pictures in a style at once imposing and incomprehensible, such as they could never hope to attain.

All these details about Mr. Chipps are of course fictitious. How should I know what the genuine text of the letter may have been in which he demanded permission to study art ? How should I know who studied with him at Mr. Webb's, or whether such a man as Mr. Webb ever existed ? Mr. Chipps only came and sketched a little, most innocently, near my camp, and I imagined

this history for him. His name is not Chipps at all ; it is—but why reveal it ?

We have let Imagination write a biography for this poor sketcher ; but the ideas and aims of the dilettant, as they are those of a respectable portion of society, deserve to be considered in a more thoughtful spirit.

To the active man of the world, immersed in large material interests, the amateur appears frivolous and trifling—a little womanish, perhaps. The true artist dislikes amateurs, of course, for two reasons ; mainly from wounded self-respect, because society praises their false work and neglects his own genuine work ; but also from that natural antipathy to the idler which is inherent in all laborious persons.

In employing the word *dilettant*, I pray the reader to bear in mind that I mean by it only this :—A person, namely, who devotes himself to the pursuit of art as an amusement. The common acceptation of the word *amateur* is somewhat narrower than this, being vulgarly used to designate a person who follows art for itself, and not for money. So we need not employ this word “amateur” at all, but rather choose “dilettant,” to which Goethe has already given a profounder signification. The social distinction between painters who sell their works, and painters who keep them, can be of no concernment whatever to us, since it does not in itself at all affect the character of the works produced. The vital and radical distinction, the essential difference, is to be sought in the spirit in which the painter acts ; whether he paints idly, to amuse himself, or works seriously and with all his might. If an illustration were wanted, we

should readily find the two characters combined in one individual ; indeed, every reader must have known university men who, after having given their best labour to the dead languages, without a thought of amusing themselves thereby, turn to the living ones in the true spirit of dilettantism.

The dilettant, then, is a person who follows art to amuse himself ; not seriously, as a study. In this sense, almost all “ amateurs,” and, not these only, but even a large proportion of professional artists also, are merely dilettants.

The title of artist, in its highest sense, belongs exclusively to the accomplished master, in any fine art whatever, students having no claim to it. Thus, the highest title we can accord to the poet in words, is this one of “ artist.” But this regal appellation, than which I know of none more exalted in the orders of intellectual nobility, has been so vulgarised and cheapened by common usage, that it seems hopeless for us now to restore its lost lustre. I shall, therefore, though painfully against my conscience, employ the word artist, generally, for the class of painters in earnest. So *dilettant* is a painter in play, and *artist* a painter in earnest.

There are thousands of well-to-do people who have no higher object in life than the dilettant's ; namely, to amuse themselves. It is a hard life, this pursuit of small pleasures ; but it is full of dignity and honour, because it proves the possession of leisure which infers the command of money, since without it leisure, is unattainable. And this money, whatever artifices of language may be employed to conceal its true nature, is, and always has

been, the most commonly recognised title to social consideration.

But this is not the only reason why the dilettant's attempts meet with such ready and facile applause from a society which is comparatively insensible to genuine art. We may admire a dilettant's sketch with safety, even with possible advantage ; for if we only praise it warmly enough, the pleased gentleman will appreciate our discernment, and perhaps ask us to dinner ; whereas, if we praise a professional painter, he will think we are going to patronise him, and of course we ought not to excite delusive hopes, which must be speedily followed by bitter disappointment.

What a rich comedy it is to a calm, philosophical onlooker, this dignity of the dilettant and the pains he is at to maintain it ! Let us enter, however, with due and becoming respect on the consideration of the fine arts in their aristocratic manifestations, restrain our low tendencies to laughter, and remember that even the art of painting itself is no longer contemptible when elevated to the rank of a polite amusement !

All amusements which cost money confer dignity on him who pursues them, and the more money they cost the greater is the dignity which they confer. Of all recreations war, therefore, is the most honourable, as being the most expensive ; but this agreeable pastime is for kings alone. What a delightful game it is, and how the best players relish it ! No wonder, for it unites in itself all the physical excitement of the most perilous sports of the field, with the intellectual interest of a game of skill, and the keen stimulus of gambling, being played

for immense stakes. But the march of civilization has placed this innocent diversion beyond the reach of subjects; and its extreme costliness hinders even kings from playing at it as often as they used to do. After war come racing, hunting, and yachting, highly creditable recreations, but shooting is most respectable also. Some friends of mine, who took a bad Scotch shooting at a high rent, found, after adding up all expenses, that every stag they had killed had cost them fifty pounds, whilst another, who rents an English moor, told me that the pleasure of shooting grouse cost him exactly ten guineas a day; and it is a common estimate that every brace of grouse on a moor which requires much preserving, and is let well, costs at least twenty-one shillings. So there can be no doubt that shooting is a most respectable recreation.

I remember, when I was a boy, I went to Doncaster races, and, hearing of the fabulous expense lavished on the sport of horse-racing, conceived an intense veneration for that exciting pursuit. In the vicinity of populous towns, the unwashed factory lads hold meetings of a like nature. There is no moral distinction whatever between the two kinds of sport; but there is a vast pecuniary one. In the humbler meetings to which I now refer, it is only cheap, poor men's dogs that run, and the bets are payable in silver, gold being offered but rarely. So these meetings are low and wicked, the sporting men who attend them are blackguards; country squires moralise on this depravity over their claret, and set off the next morning to see a steeple-chase.

In-door amusements are cheaper; but a certain lustre is added to a man's establishment when he builds a fine

new billiard-room ; and before billiard clubs were scattered over the provincial towns, it was an indication of gentle training to play the noble game with skill and science.

But although a man's position in the world may depend very much on the nature of his amusements, I really cannot see what fun there is in amusing oneself at the word of command. Society orders us in our pastimes as she does in far graver matters ; but it is very hard on a poor fellow who really does not find any delight whatever in some fashionable recreation to have to do it against his will, and to the exhaustion both of patience and purse. Whimsical indeed, but very much to be pitied, are the miseries of yachtsmen who hate the sea and fall sick in a breeze of wind ; of country gentlemen who are forced to shoot and would much rather pay a gamekeeper to do it for them ; of all weak-willed persons, indeed, in the upper classes who dare not avow that these things give them no pleasure, and so pretend to be highly interested and amused when in sad truth they are dismally bored. And what adds to the grievance is, that these pastimes are invariably expensive ; cheapen them, and their exclusive character would be gone, and then people might do them or not as they thought fit ; they would then confer no dignity, and persons of station would no longer be forced to follow them.

But the dilettant, of the male sex at least, has not even this excuse, such as it is. The practical pursuit of art is not very costly, as dilettants follow it, and so it is not an imperative obligation, like shooting. Yet, though it be by no means necessary to his respectability that a man should sketch in water-colour, it adds thereto ; even

as a slight ornament, not very costly in itself, may serve to prove that the owner can afford a superfluity. For it may be laid down as an axiom, that any expense, however slight, which is evidently useless and unnecessary, and which a man incurs voluntarily, is an honour to that man—if he can support it. The actual rank of the dilettant in society is therefore one of undoubted respectability,—he cannot of course aspire to such honours as are won on the turf and the hunting-field ; but his leisure itself is honourable, and the modest expenses of his art gild it with a refined lustre.

But to select the art of painting as an amusement appears only too courageous. Why not choose something more easily acquired ? A game at billiards is far more recreative ; and chess may be much enjoyed by persons who know little more about it than the moves, provided they are well matched. Even a simple musical air or two may be very agreeably performed by amateur instrumentalists, though we love not to listen to their more ambitious efforts ;—but to paint pictures by way of amusement ! why, it is the ascent of Mont Blanc as an after-dinner stroll.

Truthful persons suffer acutely during the earlier stages of the artistic career, which, of course, the dilettant can never be expected to pass. All progress in art is from falsehood to truth. We *must* begin by drawing elaborate lies, for which we substitute facts as we learn them. This necessity is very annoying, but obviously inevitable. The eye cannot see truth, nor the hand render truth, until after years of discipline ; meanwhile they *must* have practice that they may learn, but all they

do is false. Now it is not so to the same extent in other pursuits. A young player at billiards is awkward, and makes ridiculous strokes ; but, at any rate, he is not obliged to cheat. One may play at chess, though badly, with a clear conscience. A young lady whose ear is good may sing a simple melody without a false note, and with feeling as deep and true as the greatest professional vocalist at Covent Garden ; but she cannot take up a pencil nor touch colour without making such a tissue of false statements as would frighten her, if she could only perceive them.

Now no honourable person can endure this for ever, so most dilettants abandon the pursuit early in life ; and the rest, I suppose, continue it in the hope that it may be permitted to them to tell the truth some day. But why undertake such a tremendous task as the acquisition of a fine art by way of recreation ?

The arbitrary division of studies into serious studies and accomplishments, is one of the most mischievous inventions of modern educators, and has led to such misconception of the nature of art that mere clownish ignorance is quite respectable in comparison with the notions on the subject which we find current in learned and refined circles. Accomplishments are supposed to have a decorative function in the cultivated mind as sculpture on a completed edifice ; but your true Briton, with his instinctive deference to the fashion, and his indifference to art, thinks that he must have the ornaments, and will pay dearly for them too, only he does not care in the least whether they are good or bad ; and hence, of course, we have got into quick and ready ways of manu-

facturing these ornamental finishings to our system of education, just as we manufacture cheap stamped sheet-brass cornices and stucco friezes for our material dwellings. And so we have two grand orders of education, in the solid and in *veneer*. "Ladies and gentlemen," says the schoolmaster, "the substantial wood, such as Latin and Greek, we always sell in the solid, because they are so strong and useful; but you may get a veneer of art-culture from the drawing-master, who keeps slight wares of that description. The frivolous modern languages are also sawn into veneers of marvellous thinness and cheapness; but the solid old Greek and Latin tongues will never be so cheapened." Hence the stately gentlemen who teach Latin and Greek look down with much dignity on the drawing-master; and the little boys, from ten years old and upwards, are taught to regard art as an idleness, and soon learn an easy familiarity with its professor, who, indeed, knows his place, and is humble, as he ought to be, and addresses the gowned doctors who teach Greek with a respectful deference which is quite edifying to witness.

And these little fellows are the drawing-master's patrons, and he knows it. He dare not speak authoritatively to them, for his bread depends on the lessons being made attractive to the little rascals, who have only to suggest to papa the undesirability of a further pursuit of art in order to withdraw themselves next quarter from his teachings altogether. Fancy a clergyman teaching *hic, hæc, hoc*, to a set of small patrons who could of their own free will combine to deprive him of his bread next half! Wonderful progress would be made in the

verb *τύπτω* if the master had no power to translate it in a practical manner. And progress just as wonderful is made in the pursuit of art by the young gentlemen who patronise the drawing-master. Under these circumstances, can you fairly blame the man because he bows to inexorable necessity? He is not paid to teach the lads drawing, but to keep them harmlessly amused. Papa knows it is all a farce, mamma shrewdly suspects that the pretty drawings have been a little touched upon by a more practised hand than that of her own darling; and as for the darling himself, why, he dabbles with paint and plays with pencils, as he would with any other toys.

The veneer system in modern languages is yet more obviously a failure. It is a grave reflection, which must occur to every traveller on the Continent, by how wonderfully small a number of individuals all international intercourse is carried on. The intercourse between France and England, for instance, on which the peace of the world often depends, is really maintained by a mere handful of persons. Very few English people, indeed, speak French so as to feel serious in it; and real intercourse in *any* language is quite impossible, unless *both* the interlocutors *think* in the language they are speaking. It will not do to think in English, and then translate one's thoughts into French; for communication of that sort is always held through an interpreter, though the interpreter be not visibly separated from the speaker. Our veneer French may do to order dinner upon, but there is no fuel in it wherewith to warm or enlighten one human soul. So we separate ourselves from our living

neighbours, that we may go and dream with the dead. And in France they do the same. English, and music, and dancing, and drawing, are called *arts d'agrément* in their schools—a word which, in music, signifies those superfluous flourishes strung upon simple compositions by singers of florid taste. And we know what sort of English French people speak, and what a fine medium of communication it is. “Arts d'agrément,” what does that mean? Reader, it means accomplishments, it means *veneer*, Dutch metal, pinchbeck, electro-plate, paste diamonds; anything but substance solid and pure.

You who think in your wisdom that French is too frivolous to be studied seriously, try and fancy English taught as an accomplishment! and when you have fully realized the absurdity of this, the utter folly and imbecility of a system which professes to teach Shakspeare's tongue in six lessons, go yet a little farther in your reflections, and extend them to the subject of art.

With ordinary application and abilities, it is possible to learn a foreign language in a thorough manner, and not as an accomplishment, in three years at eight hours a day.

With especial natural capacity and intense application, it is possible to learn the art of painting in a genuine manner, and not as an accomplishment, in seven years at eight hours a day. Most experienced artists would think that I understated the time, but I stipulate that the eight hours a day are not to be wasted in idle experiments and misdirected efforts, but well and fruitfully employed.

Do I exaggerate difficulties in assigning periods like

these as essential to real acquisition? On the contrary; I dare not let such an estimate go forth without deduction and qualification.

In neither of these cases do I speak of *mastery*; only of a fair degree of genuine acquirement.

There has lived, in our own time, at least *one* true student of the French language. Born in the heart of France, he learned that language from infancy, and yet in manhood devoted himself to the study of it as earnestly as if it had been Greek, and he a first-class man at Oxford, trying for the professor's chair. He wrote forty anonymous volumes for practice merely, to form his style, and, in his tales, followed all the transformations of the language from the days of Rabelais to his own. After this preliminary discipline and other labours, he began the great series of studies of modern life, entitled the "Comédie Humaine." But though the greatest living master of French prose, he still retained the laborious habits of a student. No voluminous writer was ever so patient in correction. He was continually altering and improving, so that each journeyman could only take in hand one page at a time; and it was only after eleven or twelve proof sheets had passed through his hands that he finally allowed one to stand. This extreme fastidiousness cost Balzac a great deal of money, when he could ill afford it, by reducing the profits of his works in proportion to the expense of their production, thus heavily augmented. At last the objection became so grave, that publishers grew afraid of his manuscripts, but still he persisted. So when I state three years, at eight hours a day, as a fair time to learn French in, pray

do not suppose that I speak of *mastery* ; only of common competence. There are seldom more than twenty individuals living at once who can be truly said to be masters of any language ; and most people, though expensively “educated,” have a very imperfect knowledge even of their own. If proofs were wanted, they would be readily found in public documents, whose slovenly style and unsound construction afford matter for continual merriment to the literary class.

And as for painting, that is a language too, and by far the most difficult of all. It is easier for a Briton to pass undetected amongst Frenchmen, after hours of conversation, than it is to paint one perfect piece of colour. So, if I assign three years to the acquisition of a written language, I must certainly assign seven for a pictorial one. A common estimate of the time required to give an artist mastery over his materials is twenty years. My own teacher considered himself a hopeful student in foliage after thirty years’ practice, and humbly expected to advance much farther. I have heard a young lady dilettant declare that she was “*perfect* in trees” after three or four years, at two hours a week : this was on the authority of her drawing-master, who had suggested that, as human skill could go no farther, his pupil should direct her victorious energies to other objects. Similar ideas of perfection in art appear to prevail on the other side the Channel, for a young French lady informed me that she had reached perfection in the drawing of hair, her master having told her “qu’il était *impossible* de dessiner les cheveux mieux qu’elle ne le faisait.” In justice to his fair pupil, I ought, however, to add that she told

me the anecdote as a good joke, whereas the first seriously believed herself to be "perfect in trees," as she called it.

The received standard of competency in accomplishments is easy and accommodating. We are more severe for Greek and mathematics, but then these are serious studies, good for discipline. Yet French is just as serious as Greek, as delicate, and as subtle—less rich in words, but, by reason of a singularly happy and abundant phraseology, not less expressive ; a language, too, which must necessarily be capable of great accuracy in definition, since it is confessedly the best medium for mathematical teaching, and therefore, if itself exact, not to be learned in the spirit of indolence and inexactitude. And *real* drawing is to the full as fine a discipline as mathematics (mind, I do not at all mean what "drawing" masters understand by the word "drawing," or teach for drawing). Equal to mathematics in the formation of habits of intellectual accuracy, it runs into subtleties of form which mathematics cannot follow, and has the vast additional advantage, quite peculiar to itself, of educating to accuracy the noble sense of sight.

The English language an *art d'agrément*, to be learned in play by French school-girls! French a frivolous accomplishment, not worth working for in earnest! Think of the vast national life of France and England!—think of the millions who live and die without any other medium of expression for all their thoughts, desires, passions, and sorrows, than these two modern languages which the wise pedants in both countries mutually consider frivolous!

And then try to think of the infinite realms of Nature

which it is the business of art to illustrate, the exquisite delicacy and multiplicity of forms, the innumerable variety of hues which the trained artist has to study and imitate, and ask yourself, plainly, whether it is worth while to attempt this in mere insolent listlessness, and on the strength of an idle hour's dawdling, once a week!

But the dilettant always tries to disarm criticism by urging the modesty of his aim. He "only wants to sketch!" I have heard one exclaim when looking at a little blot of colour, done in five minutes, "There, now, if I could only make a little rough sketch like that, I should be quite satisfied." O what a moderate ambition was expressed in that simple wish! The accumulated acquirement of thirty years was concentrated in that sketch. Why, this little art of sketching is one of the very latest achievements of extended knowledge and consummated skill! A sketch is an abstract, an epitome, a lawyer's brief, a minister's plan of policy, a general's programme of operations. To give a masterly abstract of anything, no matter what, requires a master's experience and power. In the whole range of art there is nothing so absolutely unapproachable by inferior workmen as the rough sketches of great painters; but because they look easy, as no doubt they were to the men who did them, every dilettant expects to do like them.

But the dilettant is not altogether to blame for his ways of work. The society in which he lives is singularly antagonistic to profound culture in anything that it does not quite respect. The minute observances of unemployed people are fatal to success in art, and a gentleman cannot break through them. When I was

a dilettant myself, an opportunity offered of obtaining a commission in the army, and certain friends tried to persuade me that I should have plenty of leisure to paint if I accepted the commission. So I talked the matter over with a wise friend who had seen much military service, and he told me that if I wished to cultivate myself in that, or any other way, a barrack was the most difficult place in the world to do it in. There was plenty of leisure, he said, but never an opportunity of employing it without fear of interruption. He, himself, had attempted to turn his spare hours to account, but had found it impracticable, and regretted their loss very bitterly. All idle societies are alike in this respect, and will not tolerate a solitary worker. An officer who goes out to study nature by himself, says very plainly to his comrades, "I like Nature's company better than yours;" and the others very naturally do not take that as a compliment. In the case of a painter who lives by his art, the answer to such friends is much easier. "I do not wish to offend you; I like your society well enough, but I *must* do this work, or else starve." The only hope for a dilettant is in withdrawing himself from society altogether, but that requires courage—so much courage, indeed, that any gentleman who had resolution enough to do it, would probably adopt art as a profession.

Since art has ceased to be the servant of the Church, and artists, instead of being directed by priests in all that they do, down even to the very details of their work, have begun to be dimly conscious that they are themselves the interpreters of an authentic revelation;

we need not in these days expect to find in England the artistic and ecclesiastical characters combined in one individual, as they frequently were under the Catholic system in Italy. So when clergymen of the Church of England take to painting, it is usually in the spirit of dilettantism. They do not want pictures for their churches, there is no obvious connexion between their art and their profession, and the art in such cases is either a private study, aside from the business of life, or a mere amusement for vacant hours. If they study the figure, they cannot study it with any likelihood of a rewarding result, because it would create scandal for a clergyman to employ models. Landscape is, perhaps, more accessible, but, of course, any beneficed clergyman would be restricted to a narrow range of subjects, whose interest would depend entirely on the situation of his living.

But the majority of dilettants belong to the other sex. A feeble dilettantism in drawing seems to be considered essential to every young lady. But as Society requires that ladies should draw badly, so she carefully makes it impossible that they should ever have a chance of drawing well; the truth being, that respectable persons, for the most part, have no interest in art sufficiently powerful to overcome their intense horror of whatever they are pleased to consider "unfeminine."

In approaching the subject of lady-dilettantism, we are, therefore, in common justice to the ladies themselves, bound to take into consideration all the impediments which are thrown in the way of every lady who desires to make real progress in the art of painting, by the

conventional standard of propriety to which she is forced to conform by the whole weight of public opinion, acting with a constant, omnipotent, and almost irresistible pressure. I undertake to demonstrate, by a frank comparison, between such means of study as the artist knows to be indispensable to real culture in art, and such means of study as are open to amateurs of the female sex, that these latter have to contend against such insuperable difficulties as deny them all chance of success. In the male sex the amateur has at any rate the opportunity of competing on no disadvantageous terms with the professional artist, if he will endure the toil and can devote the time; but in the female sex, the amateur has no such opportunity. She is from the first condemned by the sternest laws of society to remain for ever stunted and undeveloped, her finest faculties are debilitated by the denial of sound food and hardy exercise, and then left to languish into an unnatural atrophy. So powerful are the obstacles arrayed against her, that it is impossible for her to advance without first setting the world at defiance, and her first step towards success in art will be accepted by all society as an open declaration of war.

The Art of Painting in modern times is definitely separated into the two familiar divisions, Landscape and the Figure, or the art which represents the earth, and that which represents its inhabitants. They are both equally difficult, for they are both *infinitely* difficult, and the best painters of both kinds have only been more or less successful students, who were always aiming at higher things than they ever lived to accomplish.

Each division has its own peculiar difficulties, and peculiar ways of study are necessary for each.

In landscape, the only course of study is a whole life of observation and quiet accumulation of natural facts. The noblest phenomena are to be found in the wildest countries, and at the most unseasonable hours: at sunrise, in moonlight, in storm, and mist, and snow, on stormy lakes and seas, by flooded torrents, and on the cold mountain-land; phenomena to be patiently watched for, and accurately recorded or remembered; phenomena, I believe, not always accessible at Kensington and Turnham Green. For what is less transient, the landscape-painter has to work from nature during thousands of hours spent in the laborious study of minute details, which nobody else cares for.

In order to paint the human figure truly, it is necessary to copy very carefully from nature vast numbers of men and women; and these models, as they are called, stand quite naked in the centre of a circle of students. One cannot paint living flesh from plaster casts; the student of the human body must paint it from the life itself.

Let us suppose a case (for which the reader is by this time pretty well prepared),—the case, namely, of a young English or French lady with real artistic capacity and a strong desire to cultivate it. Let us fancy her, to begin with, as a landscape-painter, and after that as a student of the figure, and let us see in what way her artistic studies will be impeded by the opinion of society.

In the first place, I defy any young lady to work steadily by herself in any outlandish place, day after

day, going early and coming home late, without getting for herself a very doubtful reputation, or at any rate making her name the subject of a thousand gossiping stories and disparaging comments. If she takes to landscape, she will want to study wild nature. Perhaps you may think a summer tour in a picturesque country along with her parents and friends might be sufficient. Sufficient it would be to excite cravings, but not to satisfy them. I have heard a cultivated old lady declare that a tour was to her a continual mockery, for if she didn't care about a place, it was unpleasant to be detained there an hour; and, if she found something that she really loved, two or three days were never enough for it. Hurry an intellectual and artistic woman through fine scenery, and she will only be irritated, not benefited by it. She will experience, in short, exactly the sensations of a poor bookworm from the country who has two days in London, and is hurried through the libraries of the British Museum by cruel friends who think to gratify his love of books by showing him half a million in one day. If he might carry a hundred volumes home with him, and keep them for ten years, *that* would be of some use and profit to him. Charlotte Brontë saw the Lake district in company with some friends of hers that she was staying with. They were kind-hearted and eminently intellectual people; but, if I remember rightly, Charlotte Brontë said afterwards that it was very tantalising to her to be taken through such scenery in a carriage.

If your daughter is not a born artist, she can do little as an amateur—if she is an artist by birth, you will never allow her to follow her instincts to any good result. And,

indeed, without considering the parental authority, which is commonly nothing more than the instrument of society, we cannot evade the fact that, for a young lady to follow out these instincts, it would be necessary for her to abandon the costume and the manners of her sex, and to adopt the male dress and deportment, as Rosa Bonheur and others have done. It is true that in France, where unmarried women are so strictly watched as never to be allowed to walk out alone, nor speak to a man unless in the presence of a third person, a singular and very honourable relaxation of social rules is made in favour of artists of the female sex, who are allowed all the liberty required for their studies; but even in France this acquiescence of society is accorded only after a certain degree of visible success has been achieved. The French always require proofs of capacity before they will acknowledge the right to study art; but it is impossible that the student should be eloquent in the language of colours whilst as yet unacquainted with its elements. The consequence is that, at the beginning of her career, a female artist by profession, and, still more, a lady amateur, has to fight as hard a battle in France as here. The future may cause the present to be forgiven her, but not before it shall have become the past.

Owing to the ideal purity with which we seek to invest the feminine character, this adoption of the male costume, so convenient to the female artist, is not to be thought of, and yet without it Rosa Bonheur could never have painted animals as she does. There would be no necessity for disguise if the people knew enough of art to respect its students; but they do not, and the male

dress is some protection from insult, or, at least, many impertinences are less offensive when intended for a supposed young man, than if knowingly addressed to a lady.

As to the figure, it is impossible for women to study the human form except from statues, which can teach nothing of colour. No sound knowledge of the figure can ever be got except from the naked life, and to learn much from that requires the study of very many examples, in order to gain by comparison some idea of what is necessary to absolute natural truth, and what is merely peculiar to individuals. Now, as the prevalent notion of art is, that it is only an amusement, what would be thought of a young lady who selected as her favourite recreation the minute and studious comparison of naked men? And yet, without such discipline as this, no young lady can ever hope to draw the figure.

But though wild landscape and the figure are equally forbidden to ladies, there are one or two minor branches of art which might be followed without offending the susceptibilities of the most decorous parents.

There are birds, including poultry, if the young lady happens to be a poultry-fancier. There are dogs, too, and flowers. One may study blackbirds and thrushes from the life without outraging the most sensitive delicacy. Scotch terriers, too, though never so faithfully represented, need hurt nobody's feelings; and Landseer has shown what capital pictures *may* be made of them. Of flowers, there are the favourites of the garden and the greenhouse; but I must warn the reader that the rich mountain foregrounds are inaccessible to ladies. Here,

again, society interposes between Nature and her worshipper.

The study of mountain foregrounds is not "correct" for ladies, although extremely beneficial to their health. I once spent a month, and spent it very happily too, in a little wooden hut on a wild moor, that I might paint carefully from nature a beautiful foreground of heather; but all my friends thought me very odd and eccentric for doing so, nor did they consider that I was there for any serious purpose, but only out of whim or freak. Suppose some young lady, a daughter of one of the country gentlemen in the neighbourhood, had wished to paint the same subject (and remember there was no specimen of heather nearer than that, and you don't find heather in enclosed meadows and pastures), she would have had to make at least a hundred journeys between breakfast and lunch, or between lunch and dinner, in order to accomplish what I did easily in thirty hard-working days of ten hours each. And when you think about the weather, and take into consideration the feelings of the young lady's friends (and country gentlemen have generally a crowd of acquaintances living in their houses when they are down in the country), you will see at once that no young lady could ever ride off to the hills a hundred days in one year, to paint a picture.

I indicate these difficulties in no unkind spirit. I, for one, will not be guilty of that unmanly insolence towards women which affects condescension to their weakness and indulgence to their incapacity, which, under the cloak of courtesy, treats them as if their very natures and not their education were frivolous. I render them the very

highest honour I can conceive of when I presume that their time is too precious to be sacrificed for nothing, and their faculties too fine to be frittered away in trifles. I believe that there are noble natures amongst them, worthy of higher work than any you give them to do. If art is impossible for them, let the fact be avowed frankly, and let them attempt something that shall be possible. Our present system is in the last degree cruel and discouraging. In our Egyptian unreasonableness, we tell our daughters to make bricks without straw. We expect them to produce works of art, and deny the means of study. Under such restrictions, the very strongest masters could never have developed their powers, and yet we foolishly expect of every school-girl that she shall work with effect under conditions which would have paralysed the strength of Titian. O the wisdom of many a respectable paterfamilias who got angry with his daughter when she took in despair to potichomanie! I remember an epoch in the history of the arts in Great Britain, a brilliant epoch, when a NEW ART burst forth upon the world! I remember the day when a thousand shop-windows were suddenly filled with glass jars and little phials of colour, and printed sheets of richly coloured designs. Entering one of these emporiums, I respectfully inquired the purport of those mysterious figures, those cabalistic vessels, those blood-red phials! I was informed by the shopman, with a smile of pity for my ignorance, that these were the materials employed in the then fashionable art of potichomanie. At that very time half the ladies in England were cutting bits of coloured paper out of the painted sheets, and gumming

them inside the glass jars, the colour in the phials serving, I suppose, to fill up the interstices. The moralist and the historian of art behold those signs no more! Potichomanie will soon be an extinct art; a few years more and the very tradition of it will be lost to the world! The lady-amateur, long discouraged and disappointed in higher aims, falls an easy victim to these delusions. And when the new art is discovered to be a cheat and a snare—what matter?—some other imposture just as hollow is ready to occupy its place. Thus, from the days when our great grandmothers made quilts out of miscellaneous remnants, and flowers of cockle-shells, have a hundred ephemeral arts had their brief day of fashion and repute, swiftly succeeded by collapse and oblivion. But the art which is rooted in nature is not to be learned thus easily, nor, if once really learned, is it likely to be abandoned thus capriciously. For the interest we take in a true art increases wonderfully with every step of the pursuit, till it becomes at last so intense as to carry us, hot and eager still, into the far frosts of age, and to the very brink of the grave itself.

Briefly, since the vast majority of English parents regard painting as an idle amusement, I think we should be very unreasonable indeed, if we expected their daughters to follow it otherwise than idly. To do any good whatever in either of the two principal divisions of this art of painting, a young lady would have to place herself in direct antagonism, not only to society, but to her own conscience, and that parental authority which enforces the laws of society, of which it is in every house the lieutenant and the representative, the arm and the instrument.

The truth is, that in art, as in most things, work may very easily be misdirected, and amateurs very generally misdirect it. It is especially to be regretted that they should lay out their labour unprofitably, because they have generally but little to spare, their best energies being required for other objects. Professional artists usually waste much of their time in money-getting; *waste*, I mean, of course, in the artistic, not the financial sense; but amateurs waste theirs chiefly in trifling experiments about *means*, trying new tricks of all sorts, imitating this thing and that, and scattering and frittering away the little time they have to bestow, in directions which lead to no result. I remember an old gentleman—an amateur violinist—who, giving but little time to the study of the most difficult of all instruments, and that late in life, found himself so impeded by the elementary mechanical difficulties, that all progress seemed hopeless. Still, with a degree of *naïveté* very amusing to lookers-on, he persisted in attributing his defective intonation to the instruments he successively bought; and when, at last, in order to save the old gentleman from ruining himself in costly fiddles, I ventured to hint that the fault might, perhaps, be in the player after all, the proposition was to him quite inadmissible, and I have no doubt that he was really surprised at so unlikely an idea. The sagacious reader will not fail to perceive that a similar suggestion might be of much use to certain dilettants in painting, who run up long bills for colours in cake and tube, French chalks, paper with graduated tints, and other artistic materials, when hard study with a pen or pencil point is for the present what they most

urgently need. But I dare not say much on this subject, lest I irritate Messrs. Cræta and Lævis, the well-known colourmen, who are principally supported by the munificent patronage of amateurs, and to whom I owe a little bill of twenty pounds odd.

In conclusion, let us try and find out what the future of practical dilettantism is likely to be.

Amongst present indications, the photographic mania is not to be overlooked. Of late years an innumerable army of amateurs have armed themselves with photographic cameras, and, in fine weather, pitched their black and yellow tents all over Europe and the East. Photography is more remunerative to the amateur than painting; and after a practical study of the commonest processes, I should say that, as an exercise of patience—which is a great moral recommendation—photography is quite as useful as painting. But there is a strange fascination about photography which makes it absorb a great deal more time than any one would think possible who had not kept a strict account of every minute it had cost him, directly or indirectly. A collodion negative, taken in a few seconds, may be the only really valuable result of many days of labour. And to any one who loves nature, photography is always unsatisfactory, for reasons I cannot stop to state here. I think it highly probable, however, that dilettants will desert drawing *en masse* for photography, now that the pursuit is popularised, because photography is in many ways exactly adapted to the genius of practical dilettantism, for

1st. It is easily learned, up to a certain point, and offers speedy results.

2d. Plenty of money is a great help to success in it, whilst no especial talent is required.

3d. The materials and processes employed have a certain delightful intricacy and multiplicity, and lead to many entertaining little chemical experiments, voluntary or accidental.

4th. Its products are capable of indefinite multiplication—always an irresistible charm for the dilettant.

When the sale of bad* water-colour drawings, at present so brisk in England, shall decline, that may be regarded as a most hopeful symptom of progress. They are bought at present by dilettants to copy ; a ten-guinea water-colour costing no more than ten lessons ; and being, besides, a permanent ornament for the drawing-room. The examples of colour thus disseminated amongst dilettants are destructive to all delicacy of perception, and a refined feeling for nature is to be sought in other and more noble forms of art.

The social rank of the dilettant being higher than that of the artist, it is not probable that he will be in a hurry to resign it in exchange for any private satisfaction derivable from artistic success. But the very small number of amateurs who are born great artists will, probably, in future devote themselves entirely to art, if they possess sufficient means to render them independent. They will have to sacrifice society at first, but it is probable that the time is not very far distant when society, though always despising professional artists, will be more indulgent than it is at present to such of them as possess, in addition to artistic genius, all the commonly recognised claims to the title of "gentleman."

* The demand for *good* ones can never be too great, but these are rare.

A curious incident occurred to me one day in Marlborough House, when the Turner Collection was there, which illustrates very clearly the existing distinction between the amateur and the professional painter. A respectable-looking man of the middle class—probably a tradesman—was looking through the rooms, and seeing me intent on one of the pictures, asked me for some explanation of the subject. Something in my reply led him to suspect that Turner was an artist by profession—he had been under the impression that Turner was an amateur! When I informed my companion that Turner sold his pictures, all the man's respect for the great landscape-painter vanished on the instant. Even the pictures themselves seemed to lose their value for him from that minute, and he said, with an air of great disappointment, "Only an artist! I thought he'd been a gentleman!"

But the condition of dilettantism is intolerable to the true artist. I have known one, as true an artist, in feeling at least, as ever lived, and in proper comprehension of the nature and nobleness of art, who suffered most acutely because circumstances had forced him to remain in the honourable position of an amateur. Very sincerely and pathetically did he deplore to me that his position as heir and future representative of a wealthy landed house condemned him to the dull routine of a land-owner's existence, when all his instincts called him to the career of a painter. It was the saddest case I ever heard of; though a noble estate is a sort of misfortune that many persons would bear with equanimity. Nevertheless, however odd it may appear, I confess that my friend's distress seems to me very natural, and that I sympathised quite

unaffectedly with him when he laid before me, in his serious, melancholy way, all the disagreeables of his unhappy position. And I believe that no genuine artist, unless pressed by the most urgent necessity, would like to abandon his art in order to turn country-squire, and drain land and breed cattle. The duties of a country gentleman are very various and absorbing. If they are not regularly fulfilled, he suffers all kinds of loss and vexation ; and if he performs them properly, he is very much tied by them.

I look upon this amateur as a representative of that noble class of true amateurs who, having a sincere love for art, and real qualifications for the practical pursuit of it, are yet prevented by the claims of the world from devoting their whole time to it. The aim of what is popularly called "education" being to make philologists of us all, and the study of words being the serious business of twenty years of our existence, it of course follows that whatever instincts exist in a boy's nature, which would in their development interfere with this grand aim of making a philologist of him, are forcibly repressed, and many amateurs are in fact artists whom the usages of the world have condemned to other less congenial yet more "respectable" avocations. For these I feel sincere sympathy, far too much sympathy ever to amuse myself by laughing at them, however tenderly. Their unhappy efforts to enter a fair world from which they are debarred for ever—their sad recurrence to a beloved pursuit from mere instinct of affection, without any hope of earthly reward—the scanty measure of success which their unpractised fingers reach, in comparison with the splendour

of their early aspiration—all this is too sad to excite ridicule ; and, however poor their performance, I cannot speak of such men without deep respect. But the other sort, who condescend to amuse themselves with art as they amuse themselves with billiards and backgammon, deserve no quarter.

Certainly this noble amateur was no dilettant, as Goethe understood dilettantism. He was not an artist, either, in the highest sense, *but he was a true artist arrested in his development.*

I hope that this paper will be discouraging to none but idle dilettants who follow art in play, and not in earnest. Let me, therefore, in conclusion, point out what seems hopeful in the nobler amateurship.

The first hope I have is, that the present false dilettantism will utterly explode after this generation, and never more be heard of. It is a huge overblown illusion, destined to speedy and irremediable collapse. Let every honest writer give it a good prick with his pen. Let every sensible paterfamilias set his face courageously against it. Let there be no more specimens of showy work asked for, or tolerated, at the close of the half-year. If there is the least appearance of *prettiness* in your little daughter's work, change her drawing-master if you can ; and if you cannot, let her give up drawing altogether for the present. Ask always for *truth*, no matter how unpretending or even ugly it may seem, so at least shall you get a foundation.

The future work to be built on this foundation can rarely be very beautiful or showy ; few amateurs have time to make it so, but, at least, it may be good and useful.

A very high degree of delicacy and skill in *drawing* is attainable by a laborious amateur. His pen or pencil work may be most truthful, and precious therefore for the truths it records. Look at the exquisite drawings of Mr. Ruskin, a writer whose time is largely occupied by literary work and critical researches; and yet, how many professional painters can draw as delicately as he can? But do not fancy that Mr. Ruskin had ever any notion of studying art by way of an amusement. On the contrary, few professional artists ever were so thoroughly in earnest.

For, since the world began, no great things have been done merely for amusement. That amusement is the only motive of a large class in modern society I know very well, but that class does no good either to itself or others, and is always dissatisfied and miserable, suffering fearfully from *ennui*. Human energies don't develop themselves, somehow, under such training, and human life is a very poor affair indeed when it has no higher aim, no better purpose, than to get itself amused. Great things are often done for fame, often for wealth, oftener from a pure desire to be of use and to do good; but I never heard of any great or noble thing which was done merely to kill time in the doing of it.

The lofty aim which every amateur should propose to himself is the acquisition of the artistic sense. It is a fact, not very generally understood, that an artist sees quite differently from other persons, and that, in comparison with his power of sight, all ordinary seeing is blindness. The artistic power of memory, too, is marvellous, in comparison with the memory of any

ordinary spectator.* A true painter, with a strong natural memory, who has drawn a castle from nature, will be able to tell you, long afterwards, on which of the turrets the lichen is golden and on which grey; he will tell you where the ivy grows thickest, and remember every rent in the wall. . . . After writing the foregoing sentence, I paused for a minute to recollect a very complicated scene in a rocky hill-stream four hundred miles off. I can see the particular stones almost as if I were there, and not only that, but I can tell which are mossy and which are not, and of those which are partially covered with moss I can tell where the moss stops short and leaves the stones bare. This sort of memory, perhaps, is of little practical use, but it affords a wonderful degree of enjoyment, and adds greatly to the pleasure of existence. And if you don't care about castles and streams, surely there is *something* that you care about and would be glad to remember, some day, far away.

This, indeed, is a noble object, to gain admission into the Paradise of natural beauty, and whoever labours bravely for that end shall have his reward.

To him, as Thackeray said of Ridley, splendours of nature shall be revealed, to vulgar sights invisible, and beauties made manifest in forms, colours, shadows of common objects, where most of the world only see what is dull and gross and familiar. "One reads in

* I mean the power of recollecting the *appearances* of things. Every special study cultivates a sort of memory peculiar to itself. Thus the memory of a great anatomist is an anatomical museum, and that of a geologist a portfolio of diagrams. But the memory of a landscape-painter is a complete world of picturesque countries, seen as in Nature itself.

the magic story-books of a charm or a flower which the wizard gives, and which enables the bearer to see the fairies. O enchanting boon of nature which reveals to the possessor the hidden spirits of beauty round about him, spirits which the strongest and most gifted masters compel into painting or song! To others it is granted but to have fleeting glimpses of that fair art-world, and, tempted by ambition, or barred by faint-heartedness, or driven by necessity, to turn away thence to the vulgar life-track, and the light of common day."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAW OF PROGRESS IN ART.

THE course of artistic or other discovery appears to be very much the same as the succession of processes followed by an artist in the construction of a single picture, only that in the great field of human progress the work is accomplished by the *race*, and taken up successively at its different stages by relays of innumerable workers. The construction of a picture is usually effected very much as follows. First a rude charcoal sketch to get things in their places, and to indicate the division of the future labour. This first sketch is rude to such a degree that persons not conversant with art would not know what was meant by it, most of the curves being represented by angles and straight lines even by the best figure-painters; but, however rude, it is extremely useful as a marking out of boundaries. Then comes a careful outline of the principal of these boundaries; that is, the lines enclosing the great masses. Then within these lines the dead colour is roughly laid—roughly, though with consummate foresight. Then comes a second painting in detail, then a third in still minuter detail, and, with some men, even a fourth, fifth, and sixth, of detail within detail, film over film, till

the work has reached the highest excellence possible to the painter.

Now, the history of human art in its great relations to the whole race is merely a repetition of this process on a vast scale, extending its minor processes through ages, and employing, not merely the fingers of one workman, but of all the best workmen in the world, generation after generation.

First the great Father of the art comes and traces out the charcoal sketch. He has time only to do this roughly and then die. Another generation carries the work on by a more accurate division and definition of the boundaries of future labour. A third begins to fill these boundaries. A fourth goes over the whole ground again, but this time in detail. A fifth traverses it all over again, but with far minuter detail ; and after this the only work for the race is this continual going over and over again the whole field of labour, traced out and partly prepared by their forefathers, but every time with more accurate discrimination in the detail.

The same order of progress is visible in maritime discovery, in the geography of the land, in the progress of agriculture, and in the advance of every science.

In maritime discovery you will find this law of progress constant from the voyage of Columbus to that of the last New York clipper. When Columbus crossed the Atlantic, the first rude sketch was made. To-day thousands of sea-captains are hard at work on the details. The credit of originating this great system of observation is due to the United States. More than a thousand of her navigators "were engaged," says Maury, "day and

night, and in all parts of the ocean, in making and recording observations according to a uniform plan, and in furthering this attempt to increase our knowledge as to the winds and currents of the sea, and other phenomena that relate to its navigation and physical geography." And now all the great European nations co-operate in this plan, so that the ocean is covered with observers.

In the geography of the land we see a steady tendency towards accuracy in maps. If we take Great Britain alone as an example, we shall observe that the improvement from the earliest known maps to the Ordnance survey is not in extent of ground, but in accuracy of detail. The wonderful advance from the first rude sketch of the island to the present minute survey of every square yard of it is a perfect type of all human progress, which consists far less in the conquest of new realms—for this is only possible in the very earliest stage of progress—than in the increasing accuracy with which realms long since conquered by our forefathers are gradually made known to us.

In the progress of agriculture we find another equally instructive example. It is always tending to a culture less and less superficial, or "skimming," as they call it in America, and more and more thorough. The progress of agriculture does not consist in the enlargement of kingdoms. The new generation occupies the old ground, but carries its culture to a more detailed perfection.

In the advance of other sciences the same course is followed. First comes a man of large grasp, who lays down the rough charcoal outline of the new science; then two or three take it up and define his outline

better, correcting it where faultiest. Some time afterwards you will find ten thousand labourers filling up the minutest details of the discovery. The history of photography from the days of Niepce to the present time is the most striking illustration I remember. The original problem has scarcely been enlarged, but how minutely has it been worked out! Human anatomy and physiology have followed the same law. The first problem was *Man*, and the problem of to-day is still *Man*; but within this narrow envelope, our skin, how much has been explored and learned, how much yet remains for future investigation!

In the history of our art of Landscape Painting, Turner, our Columbus, did not supersede, but prepare our work. We are, in relation to him, as observant sea-captains to a great maritime discoverer. We go over the same waters, and we add the results of all our lives of observation to his great hints and strivings after truth. In the broad facts he saw and proved, our evidence confirms his, but we have still much to explore in which his charts cannot help us.

What is known as the pre-Raphaelite movement in painting resembles the system of maritime observations instituted by the United States. The sea had been traversed before by innumerable navigators, but the time had at last arrived when a more accurate and perfect knowledge of it was felt to be desirable. It was all to be examined over again, therefore, on a system infinitely more exacting and more severe than had ever been applied to it before. So in art, though Titian had painted figures and Turner landscapes, it was felt by

our younger painters that the time was ripe for a new investigation of Nature's *aspects*, both in man and the earth ; but this new investigation must be conducted with a resolute adherence to truth, and an accurate recording (in colours) of artistic observations. So we are going over the whole ground again like the modern sea-captains with their charts and note-books. And it is probable that we shall surpass our predecessors in accuracy, because this is a quality which increases with the progress of science. But as to our surpassing them in creative genius, that is quite another matter, depending entirely on individual capacity. For the painter is a compound of poet and man of science, and it does not follow that the poetic half of him will develop itself with the same rapidity as the scientific half. The probability seems even to lie a little the other way ; it is difficult to conceive any order of quite accurate landscape as purely poetical as the fairest Turnerian dreams.

I thus associate artistic progress with scientific, because the art of painting is strictly a compound of two sciences, with a poetic infusion from the mind of the artist. The sciences are, first, the great science of natural aspects, an infinite ocean of discovery which ten thousand discoverers might traverse for ever without exhausting ; and, secondly, the technical science of colour. These sciences follow precisely the same law of progress as all other sciences, though the element of human feeling may remain much the same in different generations of men. Painting, however, develops itself very unequally, because one of its component sciences may be quite stationary, whilst another is in rapid progress. Thus in

the Renaissance schools, generally, the science of the human figure progressed with astonishing vigour, whilst the science of landscape gained little ground. The science of colour, more limited and technical than that of natural aspects, reached an early and splendid maturity in Titian; nevertheless we moderns have added to it several valuable processes, unknown to Titian, yet absolutely necessary for the accurate rendering of many truths we desire to express, which did not come within the range of Titian's art. In all this, painting is exactly on the same footing with other sciences; the highest element in it, the *soul* of its master-works, being always, in every age, a matter of individual genius. The progressive element in our art is the scientific element, not the poetic; but it must not be forgotten that the scientific portion of any work of pictorial art is a very large portion of it—is, in short, the whole body of it—that the feeling of the artist infuses the spiritual element only, and has nothing to do with matters of scientific fact.

We are neither to underrate nor to exaggerate the importance of the science of natural aspects, but we are to understand that, like all other sciences, it is essentially progressive, and we are to accept its progress as a matter of course. Artists will not be any the more famous for being scientific, but they are compelled to become scientific, because they have embraced a profession which includes a natural science, just as the profession of medicine does. What I desire to enforce is, the great truth that *within* the Art of Painting there exists, flourishes, and advances, a noble and glorious SCIENCE—a science as great as geology, or astronomy, or

chemistry—a science, like them, based entirely on nature, and which is essentially and irresistibly progressive.

Whether, in its mighty progress, this great science will forward the poetic part of the art, I know not ; but it will undoubtedly furnish continually new subjects for noble thought, and new excitement to the enthusiasm of the student. Without this stimulus of progress, the art would become conventionalised and sink into a manufacture, as it always has done when religious authority or national customs have arrested its scientific advance. I, therefore, believe that the very greatest of all dangers to our art, if not the only danger to it, is the stoppage of its scientific development ; in other words, its abandonment of the pursuit of truth. So long as all Nature is open to art, there surely cannot lack the necessary excitement for the poetic temperament in the artist.

And as I perceive now around me all the signs of intense scientific activity in contemporary artists ; as they ransack all the realms of Nature for new facts, and are incessantly recording on canvass truths which were never before recorded for the human race, I feel unlimited hope and confidence in the future. The apprehensions of the approaching extinction of the art of painting, expressed by Constable and others, appear to me just as reasonable and well-founded as apprehensions of the approaching extinction of the science of geography. In 1822, Constable said, “The art *will go out*” (the italics are his own) ; “there will be no genuine painting in England in thirty years.” Well, the thirty years have elapsed, and *has* the art gone out ? There is painting amongst us now, as it seems

to me, infinitely more "genuine" than Constable's own work. Our school is in the most hopeful state possible, loyal to Nature, patient, observant, and conscientious; it is exactly what a young school ought to be. With regard to its technical work, it has, in figure-subjects generally, not degenerated, but advanced in mastery since Constable's time, and the least of our true landscape-painters knows his craft too well to repeat Constable's experiments with the palette-knife.

CHAPTER IX.

FAME.

A FRENCH gentleman whom I know very well had a daughter—she is now dead—who was distinguished as one of the most brilliant performers on the pianoforte in all France. Her father was rich, and belonged to that class of society which considers that its daughters cannot earn money in any way whatever without loss of caste, so the lady could not be a professional musician as she ought to have been, but was left to develop her wonderful talent for the delight of a few private friends. Such a position was essentially false. When Nature endows a human being with supreme musical genius, it is intended, not for the possessor alone, nor for any one circle of private friends, but for the human race. And the desire for publicity grew in the girl's mind as she rose to the heights of her art. It became necessary to give weekly musical soirées for the exhibition of her talent. After a while this no longer sufficed, and she performed in a few public concerts of the highest order. You may say that this was vanity, and not a ladylike tendency at all. But *I* say that it was the irresistible impulse of a true genius. Can a great instrumentalist be intended by Nature to perform for his own selfish

pleasure? People are no more endowed with music that they may play to themselves than with tongues that they may talk to themselves. And when a nobleman of high rank, like the Marquis of Candia (commonly known as Mario), is gifted by Nature with so admirable a natural instrument, we have all a kind of claim to the delight of it, as we have to the light of the stars. And though the instinctive thirst for fame may be often quenched by the coldness of high caste, there is such an appetite, either active or dormant, in all intellects to which fame naturally belongs. A certain degree of fame is essential to the free exercise of certain forces within us, and where there is a constitutional indifference to it those forces have no existence. In the course of this chapter I shall show that the desire for widely spread celebrity, so commonly reproached against the artistic class as a weakness or a defect, is perfectly rational and right, and means no more than this, that all persons belonging to that class desire a field sufficiently ample for the free exercise of their especial functions—a feeling they have in common with many other classes.

It is necessary, however, to draw a trenchant distinction between this right desire for fame, and the morbid or foolish longing for it on its own account. It is one thing to desire to be celebrated, that we may work with due effect, and another to desire only that we may be celebrated. But even the most diseased and degraded craving for notoriety is often the perversion of a true instinct unconscious of its own import.

Fame of very different degrees and very different

orders is necessary to men in different situations. Men of the highest social rank are immensely famous without the least effort on their part ; and yet as they are saved all that visible seeking after fame which characterises artists of all kinds, they are never spoken of as celebrated, celebrity is so inevitable to them. We say of Landseer that he is a celebrated painter, but not of Victoria that she is a celebrated queen, because painters are for the most part obscure, whereas all monarchs are celebrated by the mere fact of their position. They cannot help being famous : their names are on every one's lips, whether they will or no. And they are famous for this very obvious reason, that a great glare and blaze of fame penetrating into every nook and cranny of their dominions is absolutely necessary to the most ordinary exercise of their function of sovereignty. I, therefore, take the fame of the monarch to begin with, as the most obvious instance of functional or necessary celebrity, the only celebrity in whatever class which rational men desire ; and I think that, in descending the social scale, I shall find no difficulty in demonstrating that the desire for fame, so far from being peculiar to the artistic class, is common to all men in their several spheres, each desiring that degree and order of renown which is suitable to his position, and necessary to his forceful and effectual life therein.

I find no order of fame so certain as that which is attached to a man's social position. The renown of monarchs is, of course, the best and most obvious example of this kind of celebrity, yet it is not confined to any royal or noble class, but belongs in minor degrees

to all rich or locally influential men. The fame of rulers is necessarily co-extensive with the number of people they govern; and as the Emperor Napoleon is inevitably known to all Frenchmen, so also is the cotton manufacturer known to his hands, the landlord to his tenants, and the schoolmaster to his scholars. Men also become known to us when we have need of them; and those who from their occupation render occasional services to large numbers of people are of course known to large numbers. Thus, we find numerous classes of society, every member of which is inevitably famous, more or less, if he discharges the ordinary functions of his office. The governor is famous in the sphere of his government, and many labourers in the humblest occupations acquire a degree of celebrity which is not called celebrity, only because it is so intensely local, but which, if judged by the number of persons reached by it, is as great as the fame of many true poets and philosophers.

If we examine the social organization of any populous town, we shall find many persons there who live in the broad light of a local fame of a very intense and penetrating kind. Fifty miles off, their names are scarcely known; but in their own neighbourhood they enjoy a well recognised and brightly focussed reputation. Like the brilliant chandelier of a ball-room, their glory shines with wonderful splendour on one well-packed crowd, but is prevented by opaque walls from reaching the outer world. There is the principal landowner first, who cannot help being locally famous, however modest and retiring his disposition; there is next the most important clergyman, who is known to everybody in the place, and

the smaller incumbents and curates, whose names are household words at a thousand tea-tables, where they supply an inexhaustible topic of conversation. There is also, probably, a banker, and there are sure to be one or two solicitors also known to everybody, though less talked about than the clergy. And the fame of the local surgeons is as certain as disease and death. And the principal tradesmen—the druggist, the tailor, the draper, the fashionable boot and shoe maker, the grocer, the butcher—are all absolutely necessary to the community, and well known to it both personally and by name. In a country-town there is no obscurity, save for the poor. All rich proprietors, all prosperous tradesmen, are known to thousands; and, as a general rule, you will not find these people shrinking from the degree of publicity which naturally belongs to their station. The landowner will be a magistrate, and preside at public meetings; the clergyman preaches, of course, in public every Sunday, and will speak also from the platform of the Literary Institute when called upon; the attorney, however bashful by nature, will not shrink from the publicity incident to his profession; and as for the tradesmen, they will print circulars and advertise. Of all these locally famous people not a soul perhaps cares about celebrity in itself; but their several positions absolutely require some degree of it, or the whole business of the town would come to a standstill. And if you were to take the most retiring of townsmen and make an artist of him, whether poet, painter, or musician, the man would immediately desire a more extended recognition than his own little neighbourhood could afford,

for the simple reason that a community, which is large enough to keep a thriving grocer or a prosperous tailor, might be far too little to supply cultivated people in sufficient numbers to sustain a painter of pictures, or pay for successive editions of musical or poetical compositions. The desire for extensive fame, which characterises the artist class in our day, is, I believe, first of all the sense of a commercial necessity. Small populations afford no market for intellectual works, because the persons capable of appreciating such works are so extremely rare that they have to be sought out from amongst millions. But as the feelings and aims of the Florentine artists were local because they could find appreciation and remuneration enough in their own locality, so, I imagine, our own artists would generally content themselves with local recognition if such recognition could bring them, in wealth and honour, an adequate reward for their labours. The difference between a locally celebrated man—as, for instance, a popular clergyman—and a widely celebrated one—as, for instance, a poet—often consists only in this, that the persons whom the celebrity has reached are, in the one case, concentrated in a single parish or diocese, and, in the other, scattered very thinly over a kingdom. The difference of number is not likely to be on the side of the poet. For the persons who mentally receive the poet are of a very rare order, real readers of poetry being a very small and a very peculiar class; whereas the hearers of sermons are of all classes, and may be concentrated in great numbers in a single parish. The poet, however, is considered hungry after fame if he

wishes his thoughts to be received by a few thousand persons, whereas the same natural desire on the part of a clergyman is called a "wish for an adequate sphere of usefulness." The preacher will, in England at least, always find more hearers than the poet will find readers; but it is presumed in favour of the preacher that he utters his thought from a higher motive than the poet. Yet is it not quite possible that a poet may wish to raise men to higher views than were before attainable by them? and could any poet, with such a noble conception of his calling, feel himself justified in dedicating his whole life to it, unless he saw good reason for believing that his efforts would not altogether fail of their effect upon the world? When the clergyman flattens his manuscript sermon on the velvet pulpit-cushion, he is sure of his audience, and knows that he is fulfilling an undeniable function in the world. The artist enjoys no such satisfactory feeling until he is what men call famous. Until fame comes, the author does not feel sure of a single reader, nor even of a publisher. The written thought may never see the light. And the painter who is not famous is scarcely more sure of producing any effect on his fellow-creatures, for the public will not look at what he does, nor the hangers in the exhibitions put it where it can be seen. For these men to desire fame is therefore not more indicative of vanity or weakness in them than it would be in a clergyman to desire a church. An artist without reputation is like a pastor without a flock. Fame is the necessary condition for the due discharge of his function of artist. What the parish is to the parson, with its thousands of inhabitants, fame is to

the poet or painter with the thousands of readers or spectators that it brings him.

Having devoted myself to an art which needs fame as one of the conditions of its satisfactory pursuit, I have, of course, thought a good deal about it. Personally, I can see nothing desirable in it, except the privilege it gives of choosing one's friends from the most cultivated class. As an artist, however, I look upon fame, or at least a considerable degree of reputation, as a thing to be won at the cost of any labour or sacrifice, except the sacrifice of private honour. And as a prudent general examines with his telescope a fortress as yet distant which he knows he will be compelled to take, so I have endeavoured to ascertain what this Fame really is, and whether its outworks are quite so formidable as they look.

I have no concern except with the fame of artists. The fame of men of action, soldiers and discoverers, rests on very different grounds. Great actions partake in some degree of the undeniableness of money. In these things, however, it is achievement alone which tells, and this achievement is an affair of luck as much as capacity: for, though no man without very quick and ready wits ever succeeded in passing for a first-rate soldier, there are good reasons for supposing that the most celebrated are not necessarily the best. The luck of escaping bullets has as much to do with military reputation as the courage to face them. If Wellington had been shot in his first Indian battle, we should never have heard of him, and it may easily have happened that still greater military geniuses than Wellington have

met death and oblivion in a first campaign. And then there is the question of where a man may happen to be posted. I have no doubt that there were at least a score of officers in the English army before Sebastopol any one of whom, had he been commander-in-chief, would have earned immortal fame ; but they were kept down in subordinate positions, and their talents were hidden in the trenches like glow-worms in a ditch. I do not envy men of action their chances of fame. No fame is so brilliant as theirs, but none is so precarious, none so dependent upon the merest accidents and the most uncontrollable conditions. The populace idolises the successful general, and growls with unreasoning fury at the one who does not succeed. If Grouchy had been at Waterloo, and the Prussians stayed away, is it *quite* sure that the day would have been ours ? By dint of extraordinary energy and genius, but aided also by Fortune, our hero won for us that great day. All I say is, what would the genius have been without the luck, and would the British public have worshipped Wellington as it does if the luck had gone against him ? People wonder at the Great Duke's modesty ; but no general not utterly spoiled by adulation could think of his success otherwise than modestly, recognising, as every thinking man must, that though great talents and courage are indeed necessary to the acquisition of military fame, unusually good luck is, at least, equally necessary ; so that when people shout about the victor's car, they are extolling, not only Cæsar's faculties, but Cæsar's fortune.

The fame of writers and painters is much more within

their own control. There are still the chances of disease or accident, but only such chances as all men equally share—they need not incur the hazards of the battle-field unless they voluntarily seek them. Nor is the accident of position of such vital consequence to them as to soldiers. It is certainly a great advantage to a painter to exhibit his works on the line of the Academy; but a good picture of sufficiently general interest to attract the public will find spectators outside of the Academy walls. It is also an advantage to an author to have money enough to publish his first book; but it is easier to get a book out than to obtain the command of a great military expedition—the only post where the highest qualities of generalship have a fair chance of displaying themselves. The sense that their talents have some chance of making their own way without any commission from constituted authorities, is enough to console the workers in art for many inconveniences of their condition. It is also a wonderful stimulus to exertion to feel that our own ideas depend on ourselves alone for their expression. A good writer or painter can express his own genius much more easily than a good soldier; for the writer only needs a sheet of paper, and the painter a piece of canvass, whereas the soldier must have an army and a battle-field at a cost of millions. Poor inventors in the mechanical arts are also less fortunate than painters in this respect, when they can find no capitalist courageous enough to pay for the visible realization of their plans.

We have seen that a considerable fame may exist in a small geographical space, if we estimate fame by the

numbers of persons whom it has reached ; whereas another kind of fame, not reaching in reality a greater number of persons, may be scattered over a whole kingdom. We may, therefore, consider fame as spreading over human society superficially, or penetrating it vertically. There is superficial fame affecting only the cultivated cream of mankind, and cubic fame with its foundations deep in the lowest ranks of the uneducated. A religious teacher, a military commander, a pugilist, or a rope-dancer, may derive satisfaction from the suffrages of the ignorant, because they afford for them the best proof of incontestable success ; but a great discoverer in natural science, or a great inventor in fine art, derives a more intense and complete satisfaction from the testimony of a very few isolated individuals of high and peculiar culture than from the thoughtless applause of thousands. The great artist, the great mathematician, and the great naturalist, appeal always to the few ; the great preacher, conqueror, fighter, or physical wonder, appeals to every human being with a soul to be saved or a body to be bayoneted or beaten. The fame of Joseph Smith the Mormonite prophet, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Tom Sayers, is *cubic*, and goes deep down into the most ignorant strata of society ; the fame of Humboldt, Arago, and Turner, barely gets below the polish of the surface. The fame of personages connected with religious history, *whether the religion be false or true*, is sure to reach down to the most ignorant peasantry. The most unlettered fishermen in Italian bays have heard of innumerable saints ; the idlest and poorest Turk has heard of Mahomet ; the most ignorant Mor-

monite reveres the name of Joseph Smith. I mean no injury to the name of a good man called John Wesley when I allude to his fame here as of the same nature essentially as that of a legendary saint or Mormon prophet: for all these celebrities, whether the result of personal worth, or mythic tradition, or pure imposture, are perpetuated and embalmed by the religious sentiment of the people, the strongest and most enduring of all the aids to fame. Nor must the English reader be angry with me for alluding to Joseph Smith as a famous religious founder. Hundreds of thousands believe in his name, and tens of millions have heard it. That colossal renown, based on an impudent forgery, already towers far above the fame of our greatest artists and men of science; and, firmly rooted in the ignorant masses of mankind, may last a thousand years with power unimpaired. Yes, that vulgar Mahomet of the West, with his gross, ungrammatical forgery, has secured such a place in the world's history as none but the founder of a creed can hope for. He has founded a great fame, deep in the safe rock of ignorance, and the bright waves of wit and culture shall shatter themselves for ages against its mighty walls in vain. A glorious achievement truly!—in its way. Better, perhaps, to taste the renown in smaller measure during one's own life, and without the martyrdom and subsequent apotheosis. On the whole, it is a happier lot to dwell, like Mr. Spurgeon, in comfortable conjugal felicity (as that great man's photograph represents him), and have a huge chapel, and crowded congregations, and vast notoriety, than to be shot like Joseph Smith, to govern millions from a

bloody grave. For the same sort of fame amongst the poor, which is so tremendous in the case of the successful founder of a sect, attends in a less degree the preacher who merely supports a sect already established.

The fame of fighting men reaches the poor also. In this respect the Emperor Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington, Garibaldi the patriot, and Tom Sayers the pugilist, stand exactly on the same footing. Their success appeals to the same popular and universal instinct. They have all fought and conquered. Now, to hear that one man has beaten another, or that one dog has torn another, or that one cock has killed another in the cockpit, gives to the great human combative instinct an intense and intelligible pleasure. Everybody can understand the fact of conquest; everybody feels a thrill of admiration for the conqueror. Therefore his fame reaches the poor. And if fame is to be great amongst *them*, its grounds must be intelligible. A great pugilist, or even a great rope-dancer, like Blondin for instance, may achieve popular fame, where a great scientific discoverer cannot; for if the "Staleybridge Infant" gets mauled, the people understand the mauling and admire the mauler; if Blondin runs along a rope suspended at a dizzy height, every labourer and brick-layer appreciates the feat; if Leotard leaps along swinging trapezes, every schoolboy can understand the marvellous agility displayed in his flying form. Haydon was jealous of Tom Thumb; but if Haydon, instead of being a very bad painter, had been the greatest artist that ever lived on earth, he would have shown great ignorance of human nature in being jealous of his tiny

rival. The grounds of Titian's fame are appreciable only by one person in a hundred thousand; the grounds of Tom Thumb's fame are understood at a glance by every child. How immensely famous that wee thing is! Like a king born in the purple, he had notoriety for his birthright; and what so many big men toil for in vain, that little creature took without an effort.

And authors, then, how far down does *their* fame penetrate? We know something of its merely superficial extent. We know that Shakespeare's name has gone into many lands, but we rarely think how few people honour it in our own. One or two authors have reached the people—Burns, for instance, in Ayrshire, and Tim Bobbin, in Lancashire; but Charles Dickens scarcely gets down below the lower grade of the middle class; and Scott and Byron are totally unknown to the English peasantry. Of course, Tennyson and Thackeray are only known to the comparatively cultivated classes. The hard-handed tiller of the soil never heard of their names; even the pale factory operative, unless he frequent the Mechanics' Institute, is as yet untouched by the light of their celebrity. I have mentioned elsewhere in this work that my servant Thursday, who is by birth a very creditable specimen of an English peasant, and the son of a gamekeeper on a great estate, had never heard of Sir Walter Scott;* nor have I any reason for believing that the great novelist's fame has ever yet penetrated Thursday's native valley. But the fame of Tom Sayers shines there in perfect splendour. The

* A more striking fact is that Scott is all but unknown to the *Highland* peasantry.

Mormon prophet is known there also. So, of course, are Bonaparte, and Wellington, and Wesley.

When we say that a poet is famous, we mean that he is known to the reading public; rather a small public in comparison to the human race. But with this small public even the best writers must content themselves. They cannot aspire to the universal fame of kings, generals, prophets, pugilists, and dwarfs. At this present hour the name of Tom Sayers is known to more Englishmen than the name of William Shakespeare.

Still the fame of artists, whether in words, or sounds, or colours, is extensive and enduring in its way, surviving often a great many very noisy victories. Europe and Asia are full of battle-fields which the world remembers no more; but the masterpieces of literature lie open every day before a few true students, and the masterpieces of colour-art receive the continual homage of admiration, murmuring everlastingly in their august presence, generation after generation.

How are these names preserved? Very few really care for them or love them. It is intelligible that Homer and Horace should be frequently reprinted, because they are school-books, and Paterfamilias is compelled to buy them for his boys; but are there enough readers of Spenser in one generation to pay for a cheap edition of the "Faërie Queene?" It seems there are; or if not readers, buyers. I am willing to believe that there is somebody living who has read *all* the "Faërie Queene," but I never saw him; and if ever Englishmen are to read it fairly through, the only way will be to make it a school-book, and thrash them steadily on to the last

stanza in their nonage. According to certain publishers, an intense and most orthodox delight in "standard authors" has recently manifested itself in the public mind,—a statement which, being interpreted, may be understood to signify that the said publishers on the whole prefer to issue works in which there is no copyright, and which they can therefore print without paying for. However, one way or other, books are preserved by the many who buy for the few who read ; and I look upon it as a very beautiful provision of Nature that enterprising publishers should be incited by their instincts to reprint works of merit in which there is no copyright ; and that people who never read anything but a newspaper should buy them as house-furniture merely in order that a solitary student here and there may have the privilege of getting a copy at a reasonable price. And thus are the old masterpieces in literature preserved to us.

Of the authors of the last generation Wordsworth seems to have entered into this standard state of existence as soon as any one. His poems are now pretty extensively bought, but little read. He and Milton, brothers in genius, have shared the same fate. They have few readers, but many purchasers. I never met with any one who had read *all* Wordsworth's poems, and I frankly confess that there is little chance of my reading his "Prelude" and "Excursion" steadily through a second time, until I am put into prison with those poems for my exclusive intellectual provender. Still, you see, I *bought* a copy of Wordsworth ; in other words, I contributed my guinea to the expense of printing an

edition of his poems ; and so they may be perpetuated perhaps a thousand years, for other good folks will give their guineas, and put the book in their libraries, reading no more of it than I do. Milton is in the same position. People read the "Paradise Lost" once, and declare it is very fine, but there they stop. Nobody reads the "Paradise Regained ;" and, on the whole, practically it appears that we prefer Thackeray to Milton, if the fact that we read Thackeray and do *not* read Milton is anything of a proof. Still, Milton's fame endures, and we all subscribe to keep it alive by successive editions of his works. And it is quite right that reputations should be fostered by such means. For though I do not relish *all* Wordsworth, and though Milton but languidly interests me, it is desirable that copies of their works should be cheap and accessible to any student who may take a sincere delight in them. So in buying our classics, even without much probability of our reading them, we contribute to the public advantage.

On the other hand, we really read Byron yet, and Scott also. Their fame is still quite alive, and not in the least fossilized. It requires no very wide stretch of philosophy to understand that a man should be famous who has an immense number of readers ; the difficulty appears rather to be, how a literary reputation can be great with few readers. Byron's fame still rests on the simple fact that hundreds of thousands read him with delight. Is it not enough ? He may have perpetrated some clap-trap occasionally, and outraged severe judges both in morals and poetry ; but he obtained, and still holds, the public ear. The fine vigour and music of

his verse, the reckless honesty of his ever boyish nature, his strong scorn and hatred of bigotry and intolerance, his almost feminine tenderness, his lordly generosity, his splendid heroism, have laid a hundred spells upon us, and we listen to him yet. From Italian shores, out of Venetian palaces, still comes the marvellous music to us over the sea; and the singer to whom English intolerance denied a sepulchre at Westminster has so associated his name with the noblest cities of the Mediterranean that all Italy and Greece are filled with memorials of him.

Shelley, though a skilful artist in words, is destined to be remembered rather than read; but he will be remembered always as one of the most interesting persons in English biography. A true philanthropist, animated by the most noble feelings that our nature is capable of, and subjected to the grossest calumny and most vexatious persecution, who, having on the one hand riches and the respect of his countrymen, and on the other poverty and their scorn, yet chose calmly the scorn and poverty for his portion out of pure honesty; a young and tender father, whose children were torn from him because his views on religion were not orthodox; a genuine poet—and this, perhaps, needed the sublimest courage of all—a true and genuine poet, who knowingly sacrificed all present chances of recognition to what he conceived to be his moral duty as an artist and teacher; such a figure is too great and too rare to be forgotten. His sweet verse, though often quite crude and immature, will certainly live; and there will always be a few persons in every cultivated English community to whom

it will afford exquisite delight, but his best fame will rest on the stronger ground of character.

Whenever a writer is famous you may be sure there is a reason for it, though the reason may be very difficult to determine. The root of literary fame may, however, be stated broadly to be *some sort of relation* between the author's mind and the mind of the public—a relation so inconceivably difficult to foresee before the publication of a work has put it to the test of actual experiment, that no class of traders purchase their raw material with so little confidence in their own judgment as publishers. Even the most experienced of them find themselves frequently deceived; and their natural hesitation to invest money in literary productions, too often foolishly attributed by writers to a want of appreciation of literary *merit*, is, in fact, due to the inconceivable difficulty of foreseeing the relation between a new kind of literary force and the unfathomable public mind. The relation between them may be very different in different cases, and still equally lead to a commercial success; that is, to the sale of the book. There must be some sort of adaptation; but that this adaptation need not necessarily be likeness, all experience proves. The most influential modern writer that the world has yet seen is certainly Rousseau, yet no man could be more unlike his age. Better men, stronger men, left no trace; Rousseau's ideas have lived and propagated other ideas in a hundred millions of mankind. There is not a philanthropist, not a thinker in Europe or America, who is quite free from the transmitted influence of Rousseau, and yet we are scarcely more like him than were his

fellow-citizens at Geneva. On the other hand, Scott seems to have succeeded more by likeness. He was, to a degree quite remarkable, the precise representative of all that was best in the "good society" of his time. He naturally kept open house at Abbotsford because he belonged to society, and was not merely *in* it, but *of* it. Nothing is more difficult, even for the most experienced judges, than to predict at any given moment what order of mind will have most effect on the public. The great literary successes have usually something in them strange and unaccountable. The state of the world's mind is always changing, and incessantly requires new varieties of intellectual diet. From the flowing current of new literature it catches what it wants, and lets the rest go by to oblivion. Just at present in prose literature, especially in newspapers, the public likes the plainest and soundest common-sense, put with as little obscurity as possible, its favourite historian being Macaulay, and its favourite newspaper the *Times*. But in poetry the public taste seems to have quite an opposite standard. There is no doubt that the people really relish the spasmodic sort of poetry; and the more spasmodic a poem is, the more intensely people relish it. Then, again, the most successful of recent novelists, Miss Marian Evans, is remarkable for qualities the very reverse of spasm; namely, the most delicate truth of portraiture, and the most unpretending simplicity of style. The explanation of this seems to be that the poets and prose writers address two different audiences. The public judges both, but it is not the *same* public. Most readers of histories and political journals will read an essay or a

novel, but rarely, if ever, a poem. The readers of poetry, who in the last generation included all readers, have now become a distinct class, and it appears that this class has at present need of strong stimulants. But it is quite conceivable that the same person may like certain qualities in prose, and certain other qualities in verse, as he will read prose in one humour and verse in another. Physically, an individual man may have opposite tastes ; he may like bitter ale and sweet champagne. But the causes which make the world relish at one time clear poetry, exquisitely perfect in expression, and at another time obscure poetry, all in fragments and tatters, lie too deep to be sought out here.

There is no doubt that the inventive writers are casting their inventions more and more into the shape of novels, and quite rightly ; for not only are novels much easier to read than poems, but they are dramatically truer. Prose allows of infinitely closer truth in the delineation of character than verse ; and it is a grave defect in metrical work that it sacrifices a valuable kind of truth to a mere verbal trick. Lyrical verse, in which only individual feeling is expressed, and no dramatic delineation seriously attempted, will probably never lose its hold on the public mind ; but I think that not only the old-fashioned epic, but the modern metrical novel, which is its present successor and representative, are alike doomed to extinction before the superior truth of the prose novel. And in the prose novel itself, that art which attempts to delineate the past will die out, and give place to the more accurate art which studies to represent the present ; for as the public learns more and

more to prize truth to nature in the productions of fine art, it will demand a fidelity too exact to be possible without the living model. Scott, no doubt, will be reverently preserved as Shakespeare is, and as all great examples of extinct arts ought to be ; but posterity will pay no attention to Charlotte Brontë's dictum—"for fiction *read Scott alone* ; all novels after his are worthless." As the Shakesperian drama is now as much the work of a past era as the Homeric epic, and as incapable of revival, so the historical novel is already a dying art. The delicate studies from life of Miss Marian Evans have proved by their immense success in England which way the tide is setting ; and, in France, the sudden recent increase in the fame of George Sand is due to her latest novels of modern life, with their marvellous analysis of types essentially of our own time. The remarkable success of Gustave Flaubert in "Madame Bovary" is due to an accuracy and truth of painting even more minute than Balzac's, and equally studied from actual life.

I know that I may be answered with a reference to the recent works of Tennyson and Hugo, the "Idylls of the King," and "Légende des Siècles," both taken from a past age, but the reply is easy. Epic poetry is a dead art like sculpture, and naturally seeks its subjects in the past ; and so far as these poems attempt to be epics, so far they assume the character of the times when epics were really possible. That these poems, however, are no true epics, but only detached sketches, every reader knows. It is quite possible that from time to time an artist of great power may nominally revive an extinct

art; but either the revival will be mere galvanism of a dead body and have no life in it, or it will be a modern living body of thought and feeling, dressed for the occasion in an antique costume. But there will be no more *Iliads*, and I do not expect to hear of any more *Ivanhoes*.

The most successful dramatic inventors will, for the future, be novelists and not poets or play-writers, and they will paint modern life from actual observation. So far, in a very vague and general manner, one may foretell on what order of workers the brightest wreaths of literary fame will descend in the immediate future.

I think no department of literature is more likely to hold its place than the Essay. Old Montaigne is, with regard to the *form* of his writings, a far more modern author than any of his contemporaries; and, were he alive now, would be accepted, under certain obvious restrictions, as a valued contributor to our best periodicals. The magazines all contain essays of more or less merit; the quarterly and weekly reviews consist of nothing else; the daily newspapers supply innumerable articles, which are as genuine essays in their way as those papers in the *Spectator* which we used to translate into Latin in our school-days. But it is difficult to achieve fame as an essayist, on account of the rivalry of so many highly cultivated contributors to the anonymous periodical press, and it seems as if the natural outlet for this kind of writing were rather in reviews than in books. However, the increasing custom of reprinting such essays in a collected form, with the name of the author on the title-page, will render justice to many writers whose names deserve to be remembered.

The large sale of the cheap editions of Emerson's essays in this country, is a very remarkable proof of the high intellectual character of a large multitude of readers in the middle class. I was exceedingly pleased and surprised to find that several hundred copies of his "English Traits" were sold in a few weeks in one country-town I know in the north. The success of several other thoughtful essayists is an encouraging sign; and the continuous sale of so many periodicals, which rely entirely upon essays, proves that the demand for this kind of literature is not suddenly excited by the appearance of one or two writers of genius; but is steady and regular, requiring only a supply of various thought expressed in a readable manner.

On the other hand, the old-fashioned history seems to be entirely extinct. The immense success of Macaulay was due to his perception of a new desire on the part of the public to see, not merely the political life of the past, but to understand something of the social and individual existence of the people, at the same time that they listened to the history of their government. That brilliant writer may have yielded too easily to the great temptation which this new principle held out, and may have deserved the reproach so often applied to his writings—that they encroached too far on the domain of the historical novel, which was, indeed, their natural predecessor—nevertheless, the step was a right and necessary one. With criticism on the one hand destroying what is merely legendary, and a sympathetic interest in the actual life of the past, originating in Scott and carried into history by Macaulay, reviving for us those infinite

details of fact which are necessary to the true presentation of such events as really *did* occur, with new social philosophies always glad of an opportunity to discourse on the past, in order to enforce their several doctrines concerning the present and the future ; it is evident that history is sure to be a very different thing henceforth, from what it used to be in the old days of credulous and uncritical narrative of mingled fact and legend. It will have more art in it, more painting, more archæology, more antiquarianism, more scepticism, more thought, more philosophy ; but it will have less simplicity of purpose, and probably also, though truer to fact, it will be less sincere and honest in feeling. Nor will the change be less complete in the readers to whom henceforth the historian will have to address himself. They will no longer *believe* history as their fathers used to do ; for every cultivated modern reader has come to understand that the writing of history is an *art*, and a fine art, just like historical painting ; and that dead men's attitudes, however life-like they seem on the page of the historian or the canvass of the painter, must always be inconceivably difficult to delineate with any degree of truth approaching to the actual fact.

The fame of musical composers is greatly helped by the laudable custom of establishing philharmonic and choral societies in different towns throughout the kingdom ; but the great misfortune of these societies is an extreme limitation of choice, unavoidably caused by the small amount of time which amateur musicians are able to give to practical study. Thus Handel and Haydn, or at least the "Messiah" and "Creation," are universally known

in England by means of choral performances ; but our knowledge of all other good music is, nationally, very limited. And the renown of Handel is scarcely so much musical as religious. The ordinary psalmody of the Protestant services being too monotonous to satisfy the wants of that portion of the congregation which is at once religious and musical, and feels the necessity of a musical expression for religious feeling, Handel supplied the want with his great oratorio. In Catholic countries, the magnificent and infinitely varied music of the mass supplies this desire within the walls of the church and during the ordinary services ; but Handel is with us a sort of supplement to the hymn-book. His immense renown in England is not, therefore, so purely musical as most people imagine. He is a religious institution, and partakes of the deep and durable fame peculiar to such institutions.

The fame of musical performers rests on grounds so different from the fame of composers, and is in itself so simple a matter, that one would scarcely imagine that any circumstance outside of the performer could readily affect it. Yet there are, no doubt, arts, such as those practised so impudently by Barnum in the case of Jenny Lind, which make even the highest practical musical genius more productive in money than it could ever become by a dignified reliance on its own merits. The fame of performers is more intense during their lifetime than that of authors or painters ; but it dies with their death, or languishes only so long after it as there remain on the earth persons who have actually heard the performance. After that it becomes a shadow ; and

though the name of Paganini may live for ever, like the name of Apelles, the grounds of it will become so unreal that it will soon be the mere ghost of a renown, not a present power, like the renown of Shakespeare or Titian.

The fame of painters is often strongly aided by speculators, who farm the artist's name for their own benefit, though in the end it benefits the artist also. The great print-publishers do this most effectually. In the case of respectable houses, there is nothing at all dishonest about it, but it is a great and powerful help to a painter to have his name so farmed by an active and experienced capitalist. In the exhibitions of single pictures, now so much in vogue in England, and which are in almost every instance undertaken by print-publishers with a view to subscribers, it is evident that the name of the painter gets immensely advertised without any trouble on his part ; and generally, I ought to add, with no charlatanism on the part of the publisher. For when Mr. Gambart announces that he has on view, at the German Gallery, the wonderful picture of Mr. Holman Hunt—the "Finding of the Saviour in the Temple"—it is simply true, the picture *is* a wonderful one ; when the Messrs. Agnew advertise that a magnificent picture by Landseer is on view at their rooms in Manchester, it is the plain fact, the picture no doubt *is* a magnificent one ; and when Mr. Flatou lets people know (by way of advertisement) that he has paid Mr. Frith nine thousand pounds for a picture, which everybody may see for a shilling, it is, fortunately for Mr. Frith, the bare statement of a real transaction, however striking, and a transaction, too, which does Mr. Frith's reputation no

harm. It is evidently better for a painter to have his name placarded all over England than lost with a thousand others in Exhibition catalogues. Rosa Bonheur's English reputation is due to the separate exhibition of her "Horse Fair," which was thoroughly advertised, till everybody who could read had not only seen the name, but even attempted to pronounce it. The engraving subsequently *fixed* the too transitory effect of the ephemeral placards and the wandering picture.

The distinction between Barnumism and such legitimate speculations as these is, that in Barnum's announcements there was generally some strong taint of falsehood, whilst in the advertisements of our art-speculators there is none. They occupy, in fact, the same position with regard to the fame of painters that book-publishers do with regard to that of authors. No doubt the two kinds of publishers make a good deal of money by farming the brains of those who write and paint; but it so happens that with their aid the authors and painters *themselves* get much more money, as well as much more fame, than they ever could without them. Speculators in books and pictures may occasionally do great harm to the public taste by leading it where it most wants to go, that is, in any direction but the right one; but as each great house cares for its own character, it is more advantageous to it in the long run to push works of a high class which are likely to hold their place in the market, and do the house honour in after years. The dissemination of pictures by engraving, which artists themselves could very seldom undertake, on account of its great risk, and cost, and consequent anxiety, is

almost as great a help to their fame as the multiplication of books by printing is to the fame of authors ; and the print-publishers, whilst reserving to themselves those large profits which are the legitimate reward of successful speculation, aid the celebrity of artists so powerfully that almost every modern painter of any great fame owes half of it to their energy and influence.

The evils attendant upon the intervention of the speculator in art, affect principally artists without reputation, whose humble obscurity appears still darker by contrast with the blaze of artificial light with which endless advertisements illuminate names already celebrated. The fictitious value given to certain pictures, by their adaptability to the purposes of separate exhibition, is also an evil, because it injures the estimation of works of equal or superior artistic quality, which from the nature of their subjects are unfitted to attract the shillings of the crowd. The world has, especially in England, so much the habit of estimating everything by the money that it will bring, that it is not likely to trouble itself with the somewhat abstruse reflections necessary to enable it to be quite just in such matters as this, and the injustice falls with all its weight upon those, the noblest of all artists, who knowingly sacrifice popularity to the illustration of new truths, in which the shilling-paying public takes no manner of interest whatever.

There are minor arts of making oneself famous ; arts I am little qualified to teach, because, except within limits laid down by narrow notions of personal honour and dignity, I despise them too much to have learned them. But there is an art of getting reputation, never-

theless, and men who understand it, though slenderly endowed by nature, will succeed better than the man of true genius who respects himself. In the first place, if you want applause, you must lay yourself out for it. Did you ever, reader, watch a thoroughly popular speaker on a platform after a tea-party? if not, it would be worth your while. He gives his audience precisely those little sugar-plums of sentiment which he knows it is fond of—the same sugar-plums have been administered a thousand times before, so he changes the form a little, but he has no doubt of their going down, and after each one, he pauses for a clapping of hands. And hark! the clappings do not fail! There are sugar-plums political, and sugar-plums religious, and sugar-plums educational. And the cleverest, most successful speaker, is he who dresses out these old sugar-plums in the newest and most brilliant tinsel of cheap eloquence.

Fame is only popularity on a larger scale, extending over greater spaces of miles and years. There is a vast deal of charlatanism, and of all the worst elements of vulgar popularity, in some of the most consecrated renowns. There are two lines of policy before a man who desires either fame or popularity, one quite easy, and smooth, and safe, the other arduous and hazardous. The first is to make oneself famous by leadership in similitude, counting on sympathy; the other by opposition, counting on the chances of proselytism. In art-criticism, for instance, take the French critic Charles Blanc as an example of the first, and the English critic John Ruskin as an example of the second. Nothing could have been easier than M. Blanc's programme, to

praise all men of established reputation, and find fault with all whose reputations were not established. Ruskin's programme, if he had any, was to regard no man's reputation, but the truth only, and trust to his chances of persuading people to listen to him. At this date, Mr. Ruskin is by far the more influential and famous critic of the two; but to achieve this result, needed ten times the industry, a hundred times the information, and a thousand times the capacity, of his rival. Men of ordinary abilities can only become famous as advocates of doctrines and institutions already strongly established. Like invalid soldiers, they are only fit to defend mighty citadels that other men have planned and built. It needs native vigour and courage to fight without these aids. Therefore, a prudent man who is determined to succeed, will ensconce himself comfortably behind the good old bomb-proof batteries of established opinions—he will not expose his skin too rashly—he will defend everything that is already well-defended, and assault everything that is not allowed to make any effectual resistance. As little dogs bark very loudly when they are well backed, so he will be eloquent enough in defence of ideas which have no need of his protection. Under a despotism, he will be with the despot; in a “free” country, that is, a country tyrannised over by a majority, he will be on the side of the majority.

This kind of prudence, it is unnecessary to observe, is only possible to people without honour. Plenty such are in the world, every circle has some specimens. Their easy success is, no doubt, pleasant enough to

them ; but let us hope that we may never be mean enough to envy it.

Yet there is a kind of prudence and management possible to the most honourable men. It consists in the wise employment of one's resources. Every man of talent has in him capacities of various kinds, and may, as he chooses, cultivate those which lead towards fame, or those which lead away from it.

For instance, in literature, there is the choice between prose and verse.

In the preface to the second edition of his "Lyrical Ballads," Wordsworth affirms "that of two descriptions either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times, where the prose is read once."

If this were true when written, the contrary is true now. We choose our reading according to our wants, and it is noteworthy that we generally choose *prose*. The great majority of readers never open a book of verse at all, and those who *do* read verse, read ten pages of prose for one of metre. I appeal to Mr. Mudie. Will Mr. Mudie, or any other London librarian, affirm that a library composed exclusively of books of verse could have any chance of competing with another library composed exclusively of books of prose? There is verse enough published to supply a circulating library from which prose should be entirely excluded. Yet not one such library exists. But there are plenty of circulating libraries which never buy verse at all, and yet these succeed.

What Wordsworth meant to imply was probably this, that the artistic form given by a good artist in verse to an intellectual conception, would preserve the conception and become of itself a permanent attraction to the reader, so that he would never tire of it. This is true, but it is true only of such readers as care for verse. The majority of readers cannot be got to read verse *at all*, not even once. And this argument has the defect that it is just as true of perfectly artistic prose, that is, of all prose which has the double charm of inventive arrangement and studied style. I read my favourite prose writers over and over again, I cannot tell how many times. I have read Emerson's Essays, and Ruskin's "Modern Painters," and the best novels of Thackeray, as often as any *long* poems, and certain passages and parts of them as often as any short poems.

The well-known fact that a vast quantity of really good verse is published every year, without ever finding a reader, ought to prove that there is no great attraction in mere metre. It is on the contrary *as metre* a repulsion instead of an attraction. Here, for example, is an anecdote very much in point. A friend of mine published a poem of great merit, well received by the reviews, and of which a certain wholesale bookseller was induced to take a hundred copies. This bookseller tried to get rid of his venture amongst the trade, but solemnly averred that as soon as ever the retail men saw that it was verse they every one, without exception, laid the book down, and said "it would not do." They did not attempt to read a single line, they only opened the book, saw that

it was written in metre, and declined having anything to do with it. In almost all these instances, said the bookseller, "if the book had had the luck to be in prose, I should have disposed of it easily." Here was no question of the *quality* of the verse. It will not do to answer that good verse must have sold, and that this was bad, for the booksellers did not in the least trouble themselves about the quality; it sufficed that the book was metrical, and metre made it unsaleable.

It is therefore wise to write prose when a man can write either prose or verse. It is not easy to write good prose, and some men are so constituted, that they naturally write verse better, perhaps because they study seriously the music of versification, and approach in too careless a spirit the less perceptible harmonies of prose. Lamartine's verse, for instance, is as mere writing quite incomparably superior to his prose. Shelley's prose was at once formal and powerless, and Wordsworth's so entirely without elasticity, that it is a relief to turn from it to the very stiffest passages of his poems. Moore's verse was always brilliant, though ringing falsely at times, but his prose was quite flat and commonplace. So that in certain exceptional cases it would be foolish for a writer to abandon verse for prose. But these cases are very rare, and most men who write good verse could, after practice and discipline, construct prose not inferior to it in quality. The choice which Scott so wisely made is in the power of many poets. His countryman, Mr. Alexander Smith, is an uncommonly good prose-writer, and many of our living prose-writers are, in fact, versifiers or poets, who have turned their attention to prose, because

it is more popular. Of recent authors who, whilst perfectly capable of writing good verse, have preferred prose, I may mention Thackeray, Ruskin, Charlotte Brontë, Bulwer, Dickens, Emerson, the author of "Paul Ferroll," and Lord Macaulay. These and other writers have had it in their power to choose between prose and verse, and have chosen prose. Macaulay especially, as it seems to me, might have made a great reputation as a poet of stirring life and events, but no verse whatever could have gained him that multitude of readers which accepted his history. Charlotte Brontë wrote verse also. I wonder what success would have attended the story of *Jane Eyre*, if she had decided to write it in verse. I wonder very much what she would have made of all those conversations. How difficult it would have been to treat such a character as Rochester in verse! I am afraid all the sharp flavour of his nature would have escaped in the process of cooking his rough speech into rhymes! For my part, I am very well contented to have the story as it is, in plain prose, and by no means regret that the poetical attempts of Charlotte Brontë and her sisters met with a discouraging reception. For the fact remains after all, that we do not talk in verse, and consequently that all rhymed or metrical conversations are unavoidably untrue. And I think it not unlikely that Shakespeare himself, in whom the dramatic element strongly predominated over the lyrical, would, if he had lived in our day, have written prose novels, like Thackeray and Dickens, and perhaps, being a prudent speculator, become editor of, or contributor to, a successful shilling magazine.

The influence of fashion in literature is as obvious in

the intellectual as in the material form of books. The external difference between the quarto epic of Southey's day, and the foolscap-octavo idylls of our own, is not more obvious than the difference in the ordering of the thoughts within. Of course, an unknown man who desires immediate success in literature, or even a fair consideration of his claims, must conform to the prevailing fashions as carefully as new people in society who wish to put themselves on a pleasant footing with the world. This degree of condescension to the temporary moods of others does not necessarily involve any degree of meanness ; on the contrary, the noblest artists have usually been remarkable for their happy and instinctive adaptation of their genius to the wants and feelings of their time. Shakespeare wrote plays and Scott novels, Velasquez and Reynolds painted portraits, but Amos Cottle wrote epics, and Haydon painted huge historical compositions. I have a strong conviction that a man of genius who is not too obstinate to be observant, may generally find a way of exercising his talents to advantage, without sacrificing personal honour, which I would not have him peril for one hour, though the risk brought him certain riches and glory. For example, I think that Shelley, if he had lived, might with advantage have studied the poetical aspects of ordinary life, so as to render his verse more generally acceptable by a stronger infusion of the human or dramatic element, but I would not for one moment imply that he ought to have pretended to be orthodox and conservative. In short, I think that in matters where conscience is not concerned, the artist may wisely consult, and even conform to, the

wants and feelings of his own time, but not if the conformity entails any sacrifice of integrity. For no man of right feeling would regard the respect of millions as any compensation for the loss of his own, and it concerns such a man little that he is honoured, but much that he should be honourable.

In painting, this right condescension to the wishes of the public may be made in various ways, and it *must* be made, either instinctively or intentionally, before the painter can hope for general recognition. The golden rule is, to follow a department of art essentially belonging to one's own time ; for example, to be modern, like Frith, rather than classical out of season, like Barry. It was very well for Rubens to mix royal and mythological personages in his court subjects, but Leslie and Philip, when they depict the court ceremonials of our day, wisely omit the mythology. It was well for Paul Veronese to paint Venetian feasts, and, with innocent profanity, call them scenes in the life of Jesus, but it would scarcely do in these latter days to paint a London wedding-breakfast, and call it the Marriage of Cana, for the world has become rather learned and critical, and requires some truth of costume, both in historical writing and historical painting. It was possible for Raphael to paint poor hard-working Jewish fishermen as dignified doctors, in flowing robes and nicely curled hair ; but after Ruskin's criticisms, and Hunt's example, it is not likely that the modern public will long remain simple enough to accept such superfine idealism as a satisfactory representation of the actual fact. It may even become earnest enough—who knows?—to prefer the rude fact, as it

actually happened, to the most genteel and elegant idealisation. Certainly, our present wants in matters of art are very different from the wants of our less informed ancestors. We cherish our fine Rubenses and Veroneses for their artistic value as grand examples of colour and composition, but we smile at their false archæology, their childish anachronisms, and their complimentary mythology. The modern English taste is for works of genre mainly, such as answer in our art to the novel of modern manners in literature ; then, to animal subjects, the product of a genuine interest in the ways and characters of horses, dogs, deer, cows, sheep, &c. ; next, I think, to landscapes, in which truth is sincerely desired, yet tolerated only so long as it does not transcend the slight knowledge of nature to be found in polite circles. The old historical and religious art may be looked upon as extinct, and the imprudent painter who should attempt to revive it, would only lose his labour, and forfeit his chances of reputation. However, for the consolation of those artists whose genius powerfully impels them in that direction, it may be well to observe that this extinct art will be certainly succeeded by a new art, more generous, let us hope, to its votaries, a valuable and important art, having a great office in the future education of the human race, which will seriously endeavour to set before the spectator something approaching to an authentic presentation of past events.

After this golden rule, which advises the artist to pursue the art of his own time, and which is, indeed, alike applicable to all the fine arts, there come certain minor precepts which help the painter especially to a

profitable employment of his talent. It is good for him to choose beautiful and pleasing subjects, not repulsive and frightful ones, as some do; and as to style, or manner of work, he may charm the spectator by a tender care to have it as perfect and exquisite as may be. All fine art ought to give *delight*, and not merely teach facts; and it is no unworthy condescension in the painter when he kindly tries to please, so far as that may be done without the sacrifice of his higher aim of recording new truth and adding to the range of art. I confess, however, very frankly, that it is easier to tell a young painter that he is to please the public than to explain to him in a detailed manner how the said public is to be pleased. I find that in France it is not the most tender and beautiful work which gets the most fame, but the most impudent and muddy and horrible work, full of bad colour, and bloody massacres, and lopping off of limbs, and pallor of death, and all manner of abomination. There *are* true and tender painters over the Channel; but they remain for the most part as obscure as they are humble, the renowned ones being generally coarse and cruel in feeling, and bad colourists. And in our own exhibitions at home how many beautiful and truthful works we find by men entirely without reputation, when other pictures, vulgar in sentiment and glaring in colour, are often signed by well-known names! Nevertheless, if a painter sees his way to making his art more appreciable by the ordinary spectator, without sacrificing its quality, he is wise to attempt to make it so. He cannot be wrong, in England at least, in seeking for subjects at once interesting and intelligible,

and in striving after the charm of a graceful and elegant execution.

The kind of fame, however, which even the most popular painters attain to, can never be very satisfactory, because it does not attach itself to their noblest artistic attributes. True fame would be intensely delectable, I mean, to be at once approved and *understood* by one's fellow-creatures, but no great worker in our art need ever hope for that. It is my firm and well-founded conviction that, out of a hundred men and women taken at random from our educated classes, you cannot with any certainty count on *one* who will understand the grounds of wise admiration or just criticism in any matter of art. It can give small satisfaction to a painter to feel that people admire him only because they are told, and that their sincerest respect for him is founded on his faults.

There is no pleasure in being famous when we reflect how many wretched artists have been as famous as ourselves. Tennyson is said to have attached slight importance to the favourable opinion of a certain exalted personage, because the "poet" Tupper equally enjoyed that august approval. The most famous of us are in a similar position. Holman Hunt is a famous religious painter, but so is Eustache Lesueur. Stanfield is a famous painter of marine subjects, but so is Gudin. Turner is a famous landscape-painter, but so are Gaspar Poussin and Salvator Rosa. Except for the money it brings with it, what satisfaction can fame give to a true painter when its wreath, which ought only to have gathered fresh lustre from noble brows, has become so

sullied and withered by contact with so many unworthy ones?

And if no bad professional painters were famous, is it not enough to disgust any genuine artist with popularity that so many incapable amateurs acquire reputation in certain circles? Is not this of itself a fact full of discouragement to a real painter, and does it not turn to jarring discord the sweet music of the world's applause? Every painter is constantly hearing of amateurs who have amazing renown in their own circles, and, nine times out of ten, the work that these famous amateurs do bears the same relation to any real art that a child's doll does to a Greek statue. Yet these reputations are as much beyond question in their own little worlds as the fame of Phidias and Titian in the great world; and reputations of this kind are a convincing proof that the mass of our society does not appreciate real art. For you cannot recognise or feel one atom of true colour if you can endure such colouring as will make an amateur famous amongst his friends; nor can you have the remotest conception of what drawing really means if you fancy that those flourishings on white paper, which young ladies perform when they are said to "draw beautifully," have indeed any claim to be considered as drawing at all. Society does not so readily accord reputation in things it really cares for or understands. Our men can ride and shoot, and it is uncommonly difficult to get an undeserved reputation in anything so generally understood as these two accomplishments, because every Englishman knows enough of the matter to detect a pretender. But it is not so in art, and every

little circle in England has its amateur artist whom it receives in all simplicity as a trustworthy interpreter of nature. It is very natural, therefore, that artists should attach little importance to the approval of society, except so far as it brings them money ; but they are not on that account ignobly indifferent to true fame, as some writers have lately asserted. A short anecdote will illustrate their real feeling. An English veteran, whom I know, would not wear his uniform on a public occasion because some officers of yeomanry were there in full regimentals. Nor can a veteran painter care much to make himself conspicuous in a society where so many inexperienced amateurs shine in the full splendour of a fame they have not earned.

Yet the necessity for fame remains when we are long past the love of it. And perhaps of all the hardships of the life of the artist none is harder than the inseparableness, so far as he is concerned, of the quiet shades of obscurity with the chilling cold of want. Whether they like it or not, artists are compelled to court public favour, and to contend for suffrages which can give no possible satisfaction beyond the gold they bring. The desire for mere empty celebrity is, in the fine arts, the vainest of all the vanities of youth. No wise artist cares for celebrity in itself, because he never expects to be understood by whole multitudes. The best part of his work, its highest qualities, its most cunning craft, and profoundest thought, are, and must be, by them for ever inappreciable. Yet what is he to do, more than he does ? He finishes his masterpiece in laborious isolation. It leaves his easel at last, and it may or may not find a dozen eyes that

will *see* it through the long ages of its existence. What of the rest? What of the countless thousands who, year after year, century after century, will come before it in the gallery, gaze at it a few seconds vacantly, and turn their eyes away from it for ever, having *seen* not so much as one gleam of its preciousness, having received not one ray of its significance? The generations shall be born and die, a few in each shall feel and see. If the popular pretence to admiration will only keep the work for these few, we may look upon it as a desirable means for the preservation of works of art. But it can of itself give no joy nor pleasure.

Will the day yet come, or is it only the dream of an enthusiast, when thousands of cultivated people shall crowd every city in Europe, whose judgment of art, based on some sound knowledge of nature, shall give such value to their votes that the greatest men shall prize them? If this shall ever be, Fame in the fine arts will no longer be a delusion with boys, nor an unpleasant necessity to men. It will come to be one of the most precious of the rewards of labour, as one of the strongest incitements to it; and many a great soul, such as those which now prefer the shadow of a voluntary obscurity to any wreath of celebrity we can at present bestow, will then enter the thronged lists of Fame with a confidence in the capacity of the judges which no one in our day feels.

CHAPTER X.

PAINTING FROM MEMORANDA.

WHEN new ways of doing things become fashionable, we are too apt to consider the old ways altogether obsolete. We do not easily see at first that the new method may only be useful for the production of a certain limited order of things, and that the old, instead of being abolished and superseded by the new, may be destined to endure along with it, and live for ever by its side.

When our younger painters first began to finish their works from nature, the greater part of them believed, in their secret hearts, that the art of painting from memoranda in the studio was thenceforth doomed to extinction. They did not perceive that this other art rests on its own grounds, has its own reasons for existing, and is a necessary result of certain causes in nature itself, and in the constitution of man, which causes have lost none of their force because some artists have taken their easels out of doors.

A very praiseworthy act, indeed, it is to take one's easel out of doors ; but if we fancy that by so doing we have altogether abolished the studio, and substituted for it a painting tent, I think we are going a great deal too fast. I hope there is evidence enough, not only in these

volumes, but in my pictures themselves, that I have worked laboriously from nature; but at the same time I should be sorry to have it inferred that I do not appreciate the art of painting away from nature, in the studio, and from memoranda. For, as it seems to me, there are a great many very good reasons why the studio ought to be preserved, even by landscape-painters, as a valuable old institution which we cannot afford to sacrifice. These reasons I desire to state in detail, and have therefore dedicated the present chapter to the old art of painting from memoranda.

In some essential respects a picture painted from memoranda is likely to be more valuable than one painted directly from nature. It may not be so accurately imitative, but it is likely to be more harmoniously and equally worked out, truer in effect, and better in technical execution. It will also have a higher value as an intellectual product, if the intellect of the artist be of a sufficiently elevated order, to make it desirable that its presence should be visible in his work.

The action of the imagination is more vigorous when the bodily sight is occupied by no real scene. Hence imaginative painters have a well-grounded dislike to painting anything more than mere studies from nature. For to a great artist the imaginative faculty is the most precious of all his gifts, and he, therefore, instinctively places himself in the conditions most favourable to its free and happy exercise. Those conditions are, first, complete bodily comfort, and, secondly, a certain restriction of space. A good room offers both the comfort and the restriction.

It is needless to point out that, however imaginative a great artist may be, he is also intensely observant. When in the presence of glorious natural scenery, it is not the imaginative part of him which works best, but the observant. All his intellectual power is then concentrated on the faculty of observation for the enrichment of his memory. No one will be surprised at this who has any conception how intensely laborious the act of artistic observation really is. I shall have more to say about it soon, when we come to the cultivation of the memory, the most essential part of the training of a painter from memoranda: for the present, it is enough to affirm that the act of artistic observation is so extremely laborious, as to absorb for the time nearly all the mental energy of the painter, and that in those rare cases where the imagination does really work in the presence of nature, it is because the observant faculty is not developed to its full power and activity.

The painter from memoranda, therefore, divides his labours into two distinct portions. In working from nature, it is his business to observe, note down, and accumulate an immense miscellany of natural facts. In the painting-room his imagination governs the creation of works of art, in obedience to the laws of nature, and with the help of memoranda taken from nature.

Another reason why the imagination works better when it is shut up between four walls is this: to an imaginative person with a retentive memory, it is extremely desirable that all his ten or twenty thousand impressions should be equally accessible and equally unobtrusive; but in working from nature, the last im-

pression is for a time very obtrusive indeed, and puts all the impressions that remain in the memory into a state of temporary eclipse. This is very disagreeable to an imaginative painter, because he likes to have equal and absolute power over all his accumulated impressions, so as to realize whichever he will, and retain it without interruption from other causes, until it is realized. Now, whatever effect you choose for a picture which you are painting from nature, you may be quite sure that, long before you have finished it, some other effect will present itself whose glorious *presence* will seem to you more worthy to be represented than your fading recollection of the one selected. This kind of interference an imaginative painter instinctively avoids, and when he shuts himself up in a room, it is that he may have all his facts and impressions under perfect control, and protected from the intrusion of other impressions which are quite foreign to the subject he intends to realize.

In all this there is no distrust of, or infidelity towards, nature, but the reverse. There is an acute consciousness on the part of the artist of his own too great sensitiveness to new impressions, against which he instinctively protects himself by opaque walls of masonry. A picture painted from nature, in the strict sense of copying, tint for tint, exactly what the painter saw, would not be true, but monstrous; for it would consist of unrelated fragments of different effects, associated as unprofitably as leaves taken at random from a hundred volumes and bound together in one. Even in painting from nature, as I have shown in the other volume, the artist has to remain faithful to some selected effect, of which he pre-

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the situation.

2. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to define the objectives and goals of the project. This helps to clarify what is to be achieved and provides a clear direction for the work.

3. The third step is to develop a plan or strategy to address the problem. This involves breaking down the problem into smaller, manageable tasks and determining the resources needed to complete them.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan. This involves putting the strategy into action and monitoring progress to ensure that the objectives are being met.

5. The final step is to evaluate the results of the project. This involves assessing the outcomes against the objectives and identifying any areas for improvement or further action.

[illegible]

一、政治思想：政治思想是人的政治立场、政治观点、政治态度的总称。政治思想是人的政治行为、政治活动的先导。政治思想是人的政治素质的核心。政治思想是人的政治素质的灵魂。政治思想是人的政治素质的基础。政治思想是人的政治素质的支柱。政治思想是人的政治素质的核心。政治思想是人的政治素质的灵魂。政治思想是人的政治素质的基础。政治思想是人的政治素质的支柱。

in your work; and if you do not, or cannot, add the third, *which revolutionizes the arrangement of every particle*, your picture will have slight value as a work of art. And between a picture painted out of doors, in which all the three transpositions were accomplished throughout in a masterly manner, and another similar picture, done in the studio by the help of abundant memoranda, for the facts to be transposed, I confess I see very little difference in point of authenticity. The superiority in technical execution is nearly sure to be on the side of the studio picture; and this superiority has great weight with artists, especially with the most accomplished ones.

The reasons why the technical superiority is likely to be found in the studio picture are the physical comfort of a large studio, its perfect preparation of *means* of all kinds, and the absence of hurry caused by the permanence of memoranda in comparison with the transience of nature.

I have so often insisted on the importance of a certain degree of physical comfort for the execution of delicate work that I fear the reader will infer that I am unusually fond of personal ease, and so attribute my expression of what is in reality a universal truth to my own individual softness of temperament and love of luxury. How far I am alone in this feeling, I, therefore, invite the reader impartially to consider.

Of all the occupations of men, I can at this moment remember none, not involving some considerable degree of bodily movement and exercise, which the persons devoted to them are in the habit of following without the shelter of some kind of building. Even joiners and

blacksmiths, whose muscular exertion is quite sufficient to enable them to resist cold, are in the habit of working in buildings called forges and workshops. And of all the trades followed in a metropolis like London, there is not one which is practised in the open air when there is the choice of practising it under cover. The reason for this is, that the open air, however pleasant under certain circumstances—as, for instance, to sportsmen—is full of an immense variety of small annoyances and interruptions, which so seriously hinder most kinds of labour, that the workers, in self-defence, protect themselves by walls and roofs, and actually find it more profitable in the long run to pay rent for a building to shelter them whilst they work than to work in the open air.

The annoyances I here speak of are all but unknown to sportsmen ; but they are very well known to painters. When in vigorous exercise a man will easily resist a degree of inclemency in the weather which would kill him if he were to take a chair and sit still in it for eight or ten hours every day. I have ridden on horseback and pulled in a boat in every conceivable variety of bad weather without taking the least harm ; but I have been laid up for a month in consequence of a few hours' imprudent painting from nature. And of all the premature deaths of landscape-painters, I believe that a large per-centage might be distinctly traced to the habit of painting or studying in the open air.

It is not, however, as it affects the health and longevity of artists, but the technical perfection of their work, that we have at present to consider the utility of

the studio. It tends to technical excellence by protecting the artist from small interruptions and annoyances.

There is no doubt that it is very miserable to human nature generally to be out of doors in a state of compulsory quiescence. There is always something to plague one. Either it is too hot, or it is too cold, or there are flies, or one is on a wasp's nest, or it rains, or the sunshine dazzles one's eyes, or the movement of the water wearies them, or some other such little misery maddens the unfortunate student. I declare no man has any business to paint from nature who cannot bear to be bitten by gnats without wincing. The artist who should allow himself to be disturbed merely because a gnat was regaling itself on his blood would accomplish little. The resolute ones work on in serene calm when sucked by several gnats at once. Practically, however, I confess that there are limits to this endurance, and I never could work delicately under the stimulus of more than six gnats at a time.

Painting in rain and wind needs great courage and patience. I have drawn sometimes in pencil for many hours together in pouring rain, with the water streaming all over my study as it does over the roof of a house; but neither the study nor myself was in any way benefited by the rain. A friend of mine, a resolute painter from nature, tells me that he never allows moderate rain to stop him, even though it falls on the canvass itself. Still, drops of water do no good to a carefully laid surface of oil-colour, and rain is a real hindrance to the art of painting. Then there are the extremes of heat and cold, the burning glare of Oriental

suns, the icy blast of a Highland winter, all to be borne patiently, if such subjects are to be painted from nature. There are some sketches and studies which no painter can look at without a sensation of awe at the endurance they prove, like what other people feel when they read of some terrible military retreat or arctic exploratory expedition. Gentlemen who follow painting merely as a polite amusement, and lay it aside whenever it becomes arduous or unpleasant, have little conception of the infinite energy and resolution of mind, and firm bodily endurance, which those men need who have to live by their art and really face its hardships. Against some of these hardships I am happy to think that my studio tent is an effectual protection. Henceforth neither wind nor rain nor frost need vex the landscape-painter any more.

But a studio tent, comfortable as it is in comparison with the open air, is very inferior to such a painting-room as mine. My tent is eight feet square, and although its pyramidal roof rises to a height of fourteen feet from the ground, its walls rise only to eight feet. But my studio is about twenty-seven feet long, by nineteen wide, and fifteen high. Now the tent will no doubt contain materials for the execution of a small picture, and even, by removing the central pole, a picture six feet long *might* be painted in it, but the space is still very inconveniently restricted in comparison with that afforded by the studio. If I were painting rather a large picture in the tent, I could not get back far enough to see the relations of the masses of colour; and although, no doubt, an accomplished artist can, in a

great degree, guess at the effect of what he is doing, and paint without having the opportunity of seeing what he is painting, nevertheless, we all like to assure ourselves from time to time that the relative weight of the colour in different parts of the picture has been rightly determined. And for practical convenience, in following out the different processes of painting to a successful and complete result, especially if the work be on a large scale, a great deal of space is extremely desirable. I find my studio, spacious as it is, only just large enough; and if ever I build one on ground of my own, it shall be a yard longer and a yard wider. The comfort of a great studio is most conducive to technical excellence. A substantial oak easel, heavy and firm, with a screw to raise and lower the picture without disturbing it, and wheels to move the whole into precisely the best light; a large painting-table, with one or more great drawers, neatly divided with partitions for colours; shelves with everything that can possibly be wanted at any stage of the work, always at hand, and in perfect order; all these things are helps which no wise man despises, for they make good and beautiful workmanship easier and pleasanter to him. And the absence of hurry in studio work is another great advantage. In painting from nature, you *must* work rapidly, and you cannot well undertake more than one picture at a time. For although it is quite useless to think of painting transient colour from nature, we refer to nature for local colour, or else, I suppose, there would be no use in painting from nature at all. And the changes in local colour occasioned by the ceaseless

advance of vegetation are so great, so revolutionary, that it is of little use undertaking any work from nature which will occupy us more than a month. Now, a month is not enough for a picture which is solidly painted, if all its processes are to be very carefully followed, with sufficient intervals for drying. At least three months are necessary for the fair construction of an oil-picture in which impasto is employed, if we allow the right time for drying, paint soundly, and do not use perilous driers. Now, in the studio, there is no occasion for any hurry at all. Your memoranda will be just the same three months hence, and you may as well have three or four pictures going on together, letting each dry as long as is necessary. In the modern way of using opaque colour, and obtaining texture by leaving various kinds of surface for the subsequent reception of transparent films, it is frequently necessary that certain parts of the ground-colours should retain the rough marks of the brush, whilst in other parts these marks must be carefully scraped away, so as to leave a surface as smooth as polished ivory. This scraping, on colour not perfectly dry, is quite impossible; and even in the height of summer the thicker parts of a ground-colour will take a fortnight to harden enough to be fit for the scraper. Many of these minor artifices, which contribute so much to the effect of a picture, have to be omitted in work done directly from nature, and hence the common assertion of French critics like Ferdinand de Lasteyrie, that we English do not understand the technical art of painting—an accusation for which there is this degree of foundation, that in our works from

nature we are often obliged to neglect a variety of useful and cunning little expedients which lend a great charm to the best studio pictures. And it does, indeed, seem very possible that in a school like ours, where the custom of working from nature is extremely prevalent, the artist *craft* is in some danger of being neglected and lost for mere want of the leisure and convenience necessary to its elaborate exercise. There is a continual temptation, in working from nature, to abridge the orderly succession of processes, and do too much at a time. No doubt a very accomplished artist may, if he pleases, finish a few square inches of his picture when he has the chance of doing it from nature—I mean, when the effect of the moment in some degree resembles the effect originally selected for the work—but it is extremely dangerous for all ordinary painters to yield to any such temptation. For *them* there is no safety but in the orderly and calm division of the business to be done. I reserve for the conclusion of this chapter some observations on the technical practice of oil-painting, for as this will involve some consideration of the comparative and relative values of transparent and opaque colour, it would detain the reader too long if I entered upon it in this place.

It is, however, unnecessary to my argument that I should detail the various processes of oil-painting, in order to convince the reader that they are delicate, and require physical ease for their perfect execution. Everybody knows that painting is, as a mere manual trade, an extremely delicate business, and one requiring great fineness of hand in all its operations, though few

people realize how far this fineness goes. A comparison instituted by Mr. Kingsley, of Sidney Sussex College, on the fineness of the best optical work, and that of Turner's painting, was given to the world by Mr. Ruskin; but as the passage occurs in an appendix to one of Mr. Ruskin's minor publications, it is likely that the reader may not have given it the attention it deserves, and I quote it for him here. Before giving Mr. Kingsley's words I ought, however, to observe that the comparison has no reference to accuracy of copyism, nor even to general truth to nature. Turner never copied accurately at all, not even when working from nature, nor did he ever aim at accuracy. The delicacy of his work does not therefore mean closeness of imitation or scientific truth, but delicacy of *manipulation*, a kind of delicacy more easily attainable in the studio than in the fields. Now listen to Mr. Kingsley—

“The finest mechanical work that I know, which is not optical, is that done by Nobert in the way of ruling lines. I have a series ruled by him on glass, giving actual scales from $\cdot 000024$ and $\cdot 000016$ of an inch, perfectly correct to these places of decimals; and he has executed others as fine as $\cdot 000012$, though I do not know how far he could repeat these last with accuracy. . . .

“But this is rude work compared to the accuracy necessary for the construction of the object-glass of a microscope such as Rosse turns out. . . .

“I am tolerably familiar with the actual grinding and polishing of lenses and specula, and have produced by my own hand some by no means bad optical work, and

I have copied no small amount of Turner's work, and I still look with awe at the combined delicacy and precision of his hand; IT BEATS OPTICAL WORK OUT OF SIGHT."

I believe, myself, that the mechanical work of all ordinarily good painting may be considered quite as delicate as the work of opticians of the second class, and consequently it is, in mere manual delicacy, very far superior to all other mechanical trades. Now, since the labourers in trades requiring infinitely less mechanical skill and delicacy than ours always take great care to have well sheltered and convenient workshops for the exercise of their craft, it seems unlikely that the operations of our art should be quite successfully accomplished in the face of many hindrances to which other workmen will not expose themselves. And the fact is very much what we should expect it to be. The achievement of a high degree of technical skill is much easier in the studio than in the open field, and the larger the studio, and the more complete its appliances, the better the chances in favour of technical and manual excellence.

Memoranda for pictures may be accumulated in two ways. Either the artist accumulates memoranda of natural facts and phenomena with no other intention than to provide himself with a kind of encyclopædia for general reference, or he goes to nature with the direct intention of obtaining memoranda for a particular picture. The first method has the advantage of keeping his attention so continually alive, that no natural fact can possibly come amiss to him; and an artist of this universally accumulative character, although his particular

works may not present any striking imitative truth, is sure to know a great deal more about nature than artists who work only with reference to some picture they have resolved to paint. This was Turner's way of accumulating memoranda, and no doubt a very good way it is, but it has a defect which I must here indicate.

The evil of it is, that although your memoranda may be in the aggregate very voluminous, they rarely afford, when taken in this desultory manner, *all* the information you desire when you come to consult them with reference to some particular work. They fail to inform you about some fact which you find to be indispensably necessary; and the want of authentic information on such points tends to a general weakness of statement in your whole picture; for although you may state some facts with perfect certainty, you feel so uncertain about others that you dare not enter very far into detail anywhere. I believe that this simple consideration explains the vagueness of assertion so common in Turner's foregrounds. It may be possible in one or two of his more carefully studied foregrounds to discover a few plants and leaves about which there is something approaching to a definite though still very mannered statement; and a critic whose object was to exalt Turner, and not to teach truth, might, no doubt, from the immense mass of his works, point to a few such details as a proof that Turner's observation extended to them; but the real fact is, that Turner hardly ever painted either trees or foregrounds in any but the shallowest manner, all his interest being concentrated in the distance, and in effects of atmosphere and water. Leslie's criticism, "I look in

vain for a specific discrimination in his trees, or in the vegetation of his foregrounds," is perfectly well founded, Turner's vegetation being generally weak and unmeaning; nor would it be possible out of the innumerable works he left behind him to extract anything like a complete illustration of the principal English and French trees, though he devoted two distinct series of works to the scenery of England and France. The reasons for this weakness appear to have been first his youthful deference to elder masters, who lived in days when landscape was considered so far beneath the attention of a true student that trees were not thought to be worthy of serious study, and were seldom specifically rendered; and, secondly, his own system of memoranda, which was better fitted for dealing with sudden effects of light than the elaborate details of botanical structure. In considering his system of memoranda, we are therefore to bear in mind that it was invented and employed by a painter whose great object was to paint remote distances, and to whom foreground detail was a matter of secondary importance; and we are only to imitate it so far as we ourselves attempt to deal with effects in the sky and distance.

So far as I have been able to examine Turner's memoranda, I should say that those of the sky are nearly all that it was possible to obtain in the time, whilst the memoranda of mountains and trees were generally much slighter than they might have been if the painter had cared to have them elaborate. Being, however, accustomed to charge his memory with infinite details of cloud structure, it is natural that Turner should

have relied upon it for everything else to the same extent. Still I see no reason why we should not get abundant memoranda of things that will stay to be studied, merely because we are forced to content ourselves with slight notes of transient things ; and I look upon Turner's whole system as rather a result of habit than reflection. As a painter pre-eminently of skies and distances he had acquired the habit of working almost entirely from memory, aided by the very slightest notes, and he carried the same habit into the foreground. In deliberately reasoning out a system of memoranda, we are, however, to remember that we are not all of us Turners, and cannot, like him, get weak foregrounds forgiven for the sake of glorious skies and illimitable distances.

Thus of the memoranda by Turner, given in the fourth chapter of the fifth volume of "Modern Painters," the slight notes of a sunrise at page 187 (first edition) are nearly all that could have been obtained in the time; whereas the sketch of Lausanne, opposite page 189, is merely the jotting down of an idea, not by any means a study of the place. All this was perfectly right for Turner ; and the longer I live the more I perceive that every artist finds out the natural expression of his own talent ; and that all the assertions of critics that artists ought to have done this thing or that, which they did not do, are quite idle and illusory. Nevertheless, another artist who is *not* Turner will find it no advantage to him to imitate Turner's way of study, which was adapted only to his peculiar genius, and I desire to point out the bad consequences in Turner's own work of the extreme

slightness of his foreground memoranda. Either his memory was not strong enough to carry the specific characteristics of the different kinds of trees and plants, or he despised these orders of truths and rejected them on system. It is probable that his peculiar genius felt little attraction to the truths he habitually neglected; but if we desire to represent those truths, we cannot content ourselves with memoranda as slight as his, since his pictures in this respect afford so little encouragement to a reliance on the memory.

In speaking of Turner's memoranda of skies, I said that they were *nearly* all that could be got in the time. They are all that can be got in the way of form, which, unfortunately, is always very little indeed; but I think a closer and more accurate notation of *colour* might be attempted with advantage, and I have myself elaborated such a system, which I find practically not more cumbersome than Turner's, quite as rapid, and more likely to be generally useful. Thus, for instance, in the notes of a sunrise given by Mr. Ruskin, it was a great waste of time to write the words "yellow," "red," "cold," "purple," and "grey" in full, because the colours might have been far more accurately indicated, and in the same space of time, by carefully invented signs. Turner, however, relied always very much upon his memory and invention; he even relied upon them *too* much, as strong men usually trust their constitutions too far. And, therefore, Turner's object in taking a memorandum was probably nothing more than this, to direct him to that particular little corner of his immense storehouse, where the whole scene was sure to be found whenever he might

have occasion for it. And if this were so, it was unnecessary for Turner to attempt any discrimination as to the *sort* of "red," "yellow," "purple," &c., which he saw about the sun, because the exact tints would be easily found whenever he chose to look for them in his own mind.

I do not say that this *was* so quite to this extent. Turner's invention was inexhaustible, but there is no real evidence that his memory was very accurately retentive. His habit of altering everything that he drew makes it exceedingly difficult to convict him of definite error in a matter requiring an effort of the memory, because, if very incorrect drawings of his were produced to prove that his memory was not infallible, Mr. Ruskin would immediately reply with his ingenious theory of Turnerian topography, which was devised to meet all such emergencies. His memory may have been very accurate, but there is really no evidence of the fact; for, although he often drew from memory, he never drew anything accurately. I myself *do not believe* that Turner's memory was capable of carrying much more than the mere suggestions of his inventions; and I think that it was a matter of comparatively little consequence to Turner what the precise tint of red or yellow about the sun may have been on that particular morning, seeing that in any picture, where the fact might afterwards be stated, he would certainly modify those hues with a true composer's sense of their relation to all the other hues in every other part of his picture.

In arranging any complete system of memoranda, we are, therefore, to know what it is that we propose to

ourselves, how far we intend to imitate nature, and how far to rely upon the memory. It is possible to obtain memoranda so full of information that a picture painted from them will look as if it were painted directly from nature. It is, of course, also possible to take memoranda so exceedingly slight that they will convey no more than a mere suggestion, and leave the filling up of every detail to the memory and invention of the painter. Between these two extremes of fulness and slightness lie an infinite variety of systems; every painter who works much in the studio having a way of gathering his materials in some degree peculiar to himself.

In offering a detailed explanation of my own system of memoranda, I wish the reader to observe that it is adapted to my own wants, and would probably have to be modified before it could be as useful to any other artist. Still it is more likely to be of general use than Turner's plan, which relied entirely upon invention, and which, therefore, can be of little use to painters who have no invention to rely upon.

Memoranda may be made to serve a double purpose, the education of the artist and the collecting of materials for pictures. Of the two purposes, the first is never to be lost sight of, and the second ought always to be kept in subordination to it. An artist's first purpose should always be to train himself to perfect power, not to produce this or that agreeable picture. If we want good figs we must look to the fig-tree, not to this or that particular fig. A thoroughly trained artist cannot paint quite worthless pictures unless he accept some vicious and destructive principle; but a partially trained one will

generally ruin really good work by putting some unlucky bit of weak work in the same canvass. When I planned my system of memoranda, I, therefore, determined that it should include in itself a complete curriculum of study—a regular, steady training in all the hard work of painting, such as I should put a pupil through who wanted to be a great artist. The consequence of this is, that whenever I go to nature for materials for a picture, I refresh myself with a course of elementary lessons, and so go to school again from time to time, with great advantage to myself, and, consequently, to every picture I paint.

The other and immediate, yet secondary, purpose of getting materials for particular works has also to be carefully provided for. We are not to set out with the idea that we are great inventors who need only the very slightest hints and suggestions to produce wonderful pictures; but rather to under-rate than over-estimate our inventive powers, and to trust our memory very little though we train it sternly and steadily. We are to get all the facts that can possibly be got directly from nature. We need not go and paint from memory in the presence of nature; but we must get every fact as elaborately as its own degree of permanence will admit of. We cannot really draw the clouds in a sky, so we must be satisfied with a sketch of their arrangement, aided by shorthand notes for colour; but we can draw the principal forms of a mountain with tolerable accuracy, and we are therefore to do so. On the other hand, we cannot get transient colour from nature; but we may get a careful study in oil or water-colour of *local*

colour, which we are therefore to try for. The golden rule is to get from nature whatever nature's transience will allow us fairly to obtain.

The secret of success in this is *separation of aim*. It is a bad and lazy plan to try for everything in the same study. The right way is to take a series of studies each with its own object: one for form, severe and delicate; another for local colour, in which all the patches of different hues are carefully mapped out and set down in water-colour; a third for light and shade, this one mainly for the *forms of shadows*, a most desirable kind of truth; a fourth for transient form and colour, this one being a very hasty pencil memorandum with shorthand notes; a fifth being a rapid attempt to realize the effect in water-colour, whilst the impression of it remains quite fresh in the memory. To these five studies a set of half a dozen collodion photographs may be added with advantage, if their exposure is strictly regulated according to the particular kind of detail the artist requires. The photographs are especially useful for reference as to *texture*, which collodion renders perfectly, and which none of the other memoranda can render at all, unless those in water-colour, at the cost of infinite labour. But the collodion photographs do not by any means do away with the necessity for the severe form-study. I cannot stay here to explain why photographs are of little use to landscape-painters as records of form; but the reader will find the whole subject investigated in the chapter on the relation of photography to painting.

We have, therefore, arrived at three fundamental prin-

ciples, which we will recapitulate here to clear up our ideas on the subject.

FIRST PRINCIPLE.

The gathering of the memoranda ought to be so arranged as to constitute in itself a complete course of artistic training.

SECOND PRINCIPLE.

In noting down facts from nature, we are to regulate the degree of elaboration in our notes by the degree of permanence in the thing to be studied, doing our *best* to get the utmost amount of truth possible to us under the circumstances, not sketching permanent things carelessly because we cannot study transient things deliberately.

THIRD PRINCIPLE.

We are to separate our aim as far as possible, giving one study to form, another to local colour, a third to light and shade, a fourth to transient form and colour, a fifth to realize the impression noted down hastily in the fourth, to all which may be added a set of collodion photographs for information about texture, which there is scarcely time enough to get in the other studies.

To these three principles a fourth may be added with reference to the memory.

We are to cultivate the memory *separately*, subjecting it to a peculiar training of its own ; but we are to rely upon it as little as possible in obtaining memoranda from nature, because then our object ought to be the accumulation of authentic facts. I will endeavour to

explain how the memory may best be cultivated when we have done with the subject of memoranda. First let us examine the proposed series of studies, and whilst we are doing so I beg the reader to understand that I am not proposing a *possible* series of memoranda which I have not practically tried ; but a series which already exists abundantly in my portfolios, which I habitually repeat when I require materials for a new picture, and which I rely upon for all my largest and most important works.

FIRST STUDY.—FORM.

A careful pen drawing, *the full size of the intended picture*, and noting firmly every detail of form that can be got without shading. As this is a mere memorandum after all, and not intended to be sold or engraved, or looked at by anybody but the painter, there is no attempt to express distance in it, nor to make it look pretty, nor to subordinate one fact in order to give importance to another. The thing is a plain, downright statement of hard facts of form, not a pretty, plausible drawing. How far it is to be an accurate transcript of the natural scene depends entirely upon the artist. The masses are to be arranged exactly as they will be in the picture. My own practice is to alter as little as I possibly can ; and I select only the very best natural compositions, in order that I may be able to make use of nature's own composition without much adaptation to my own purposes. Still, we are not to be illiberally severe on the question of accuracy. The object of the artist is to give as faithful an impression as he can of

the *whole* natural scene, and sometimes this is best done by considerably altering the natural arrangement. We are to bear in mind that the natural world was not intended *only* to be painted, but to be inhabited by living men ; and the physiological fact that the vertebræ of the neck allow the head to turn from side to side, and that the eyes move in their sockets, is proof enough that men were not intended to look at nature as a militia-man does when the drill-sergeant gives the word, "Eyes right." Wherefore, since we are intended to look freely around us, and to gather our impressions of natural scenery from every point of the compass, there is really no reason why an artist should not do so too, if his purpose is to convey to us an idea of the place he is illustrating. I think, however, that this form-study ought to contain the whole subject, definitively composed, as we intend it to be in the completed picture ; because, any *subsequent* changes in the studio would have to be done without that reference to nature, which is so easy whilst we are making the study. My form-studies of this kind are always definitively arranged, and I do not change so much as a leaf in painting from them afterwards.

I draw these studies in ink, and with Gillott's little lithographic steel pens. I find it takes me a week to do a large one, if I work very hard, but then I draw them very delicately. The continual study of hard form that this kind of memorandum compels a painter to go through, lays a very valuable foundation for subsequent colour work. In studies of this kind, there is no avoiding the form, no easy hiding of mountains in mist, no

pleasant avoiding of hard foreground drawing by dexterous and attractive manipulation. I do not admit either cloud or shadow anywhere in these drawings: when I undertake to draw a mountain, I must do it from foot to crest, every inch of it, no friendly mist being ever allowed to intervene. Then the drawing is to be filled as full of details as it possibly can, every such detail being a clear statement of some fact of form. And all the forms are to be studied as closely as a sculptor studies the most precious curves of a maiden's limbs, the very faintest swellings of the mountain's lines being tenderly imitated by the fine little steel instrument, and exaggerated as little as may be.

Work of this kind is good discipline in forms; but if it were too exclusively followed, we should not become painters, only delicate topographical draughtsmen. For all such work is more definite than nature, and not half mysterious enough. There are a thousand facts which, if stated at all in such drawing, are sure to be stated too definitely, and still they *must* be stated nevertheless. Hence a young painter who relied too much on memoranda of this kind would end by sacrificing gradation and mystery to a morbid clearness, and, however full of detail his work might be, it would always seem less rich, than slighter work in which gradation and mystery were fully felt and expressed. The perfection of his mere drawing would be of little use in his painting, unless accompanied by other and more subtle qualities, and he would experience the common disappointment of accomplished draughtsmen, who too frequently imagine that, as they can draw better than some painters, and as

drawing is the basis of painting, they must also be able to paint better. In affirming the utility of this kind of work, I am bound to add this warning, that if too exclusively persisted in it leads to three great vices—the first, want of gradation ; the second, over-definition ; the third, want of mystery and infinity.

SECOND STUDY.—LOCAL COLOUR.

Generally rather a difficult study to obtain, because the local colour has to be seen through, and in spite of the transient colour, and noted down in the manner of an abstract. It is a map of the distribution of local colour in the picture, and should be done the full size of the form-study. It saves time to trace the principal forms from the first study. The patches of local colour should be very carefully mapped out. If you are going to paint an oil-picture, this study ought to be done in oil, using thin *opaque* colour laid on like mosaic, in patches fitted carefully together. The whole study may be done in a single process if it is properly managed, but two processes will do it better justice. I learned the importance of this kind of study from the Highland hills, many of which are all patched over with a variegated local colouring of the richest greens and purples, whilst others are covered with a network of fern, which turns to a deep red in autumn. I found that mere careless colour-sketching was not enough for such elaborate designs of local colour, and set myself to obtain more complete memoranda of it. Very hideous things these memoranda look when they are finished, having neither light nor shade, nor transient hues, whilst the mapped

colours obliterate the beauty of the forms. Still, these studies are extremely useful, and I earnestly recommend the artistic reader not to undervalue them. One is always wanting to learn some fact about local colour when painting in a studio. As I have already shown, the principal reason why painters ever work from nature is precisely that they may have the 'continual opportunity of reference for local colour. Form they could get from form-studies: transient colour is never to be painted from nature at all; but every artist knows that the one great point of superiority in pictures, done from the scene itself, is the truth and variety of local colour. Hence, if we would not have our studio pictures inferior in this respect to pictures done directly from nature, we are to map out local colours with much diligence and care.

THIRD STUDY.—SHADOWS.

The groundwork for this study—that is, a sketch of forms—ought to be prepared beforehand, because, when the shadows come, the artist will be in too great a hurry to draw forms correctly. The forms of the objects being accurately drawn, we have a guide to the forms of the shadows, which may thus be put in with the utmost rapidity, and still be tolerably correct. It is not to be expected in a memorandum of this kind that the gradations of the shadows can possibly be followed; they are far too subtle and delicate, and would occupy too much time. The right way is to dash the shapes of the shadows on the prepared form, drawing with a large camel-hair brush full of a pale flat tint of sepia: any more elaborate

kind of drawing would be sure to be untrue; because as we are drawing one shadow all the others are steadily changing, and therefore slow work in such memoranda as these is always false work. Mr. Rowney's indelible brown ink is useful for the preparatory forms; but pencil does nearly as well. I have often put in the shadows in these memoranda, with Rowney's broad lead pencils, which are very fine instruments for such work.

When the shadows are particularly numerous and elaborate, it is a good plan to outline them all very rapidly *first*, and then fill them up to the outlines.

The true shapes of shadows got by these means always add infinitely to the general air of veracity in the completed picture. For shadows are things that no invention can ever guess at when the forms that cast them, and those which they fall upon, are alike full of unknown changes. No one but a tyro ever imagines that he really knows anything about the form of a mountain, merely because he sees it; and as for guessing the form of a shadow that one mountain will throw upon another, it is impossible, for two reasons—first, because the spectator knows nothing about the form of the mountain which casts the shadow; and, secondly, because he is equally ignorant of the form of the mountain on which the shadow is cast.

FOURTH STUDY.—TRANSIENT FORM AND COLOUR.

It is quite useless to attempt transient form and colour with the brush, which can render neither truly in the time. All that is to be got from nature in cloud-

drawing is a rapid pencil memorandum of the natural composition, covered all over immediately afterwards with brief shorthand notes of colour and light. Whilst these shorthand notes are being added, of course the composition will be rapidly breaking up and running into new forms; but we have secured its main lines, nevertheless, and may add some notes of its principal colours. I have a great number of memoranda of Highland effects of this kind taken at all seasons of the year, and I find the shorthand notes upon them very valuable to me as records of colour and light. My system of notation once thoroughly mastered, so as to be always at one's fingers' ends, opens new possibilities of veracity to the painter of transient effects, but it is rather complicated and elaborate, and needs long practice before it can be used with the necessary readiness. For there is this peculiarity in all memoranda of transient effects, that they must be done in so short a space of time that there is not a second to spare for deliberation. The brain must be ready and in full action, with perfect command of all its means and materials; the hand must be swift and unerring; the eye eager and piercing. To work thus at utmost speed, and make no mistakes in the application of an elaborate set of signs, it is necessary to have used them long. Even I who devised this system found it rather cumbersome and unmanageable until I had employed it at least a hundred times.

I made it, however, as simple as ever I could, and used no mysterious hieroglyphics, but only plain initial letters. Still, as blue and black and brown all begin with a B, I called blue H, the initial letter of heaven,

because the sky is blue; and black, I marked N, because night is black. Then, again, as green and grey both begin with G, I called green E, because the earth is green; and as rose and red both begin with the letter R, I called rose F for flower. With these little changes I found I could represent a considerable number of colours with one letter only for each.

COLOURS.

Red,	R.	Grey,	G.
Blue,	H. (heaven)	White,	W.
Yellow,	Y.	Black,	N. (night)
Green,	E. (earth)	Brown,	B.
Purple,	P.	Crimson,	C.
Violet,	V.	Scarlet,	S.
Orange,	O.	Mauve,	M.
Lilac,	L.	Drab,	D.
Rose,	F. (flower)		

But as colours in nature are hardly ever pure, I had to find out some way of writing such a combination as bluish grey, and I represented the syllable *ish* by means of a colon, thus, H : G. Then, as the words "warm" and "cold" are much used by artists to distinguish tints into two large classes, I invented signs for them thus: warm Δ , cold ∇ . It was easy to remember that warm was something like a Δ , and cold the same sign turned upside down.

Then, as all colours in nature are gradated, I required some sign capable of being extended at will over a great surface, without interfering with the other signs, and which might thus indicate gradations either in large spaces or small. For this purpose I finally selected a single dotted line Since,

however, it was absolutely necessary that I should know which end of my gradation was darker than the other I put a D at the darker end, and an L at the lighter end, thus—

D L

Again, as the same colour would occur in very different degrees of intensity, I required some graduated scale of signs to indicate the degree. I found the following most convenient:—

Yellow,	Y.
Strong Yellow,	Y.///
Intense Yellow,	Y.////////
Very intense Yellow,	Y.//////////

I needed a simple sign for the word “pale,” and another for the word “dark,” because these words are of constant occurrence in memoranda of transient effect. For “pale” I took a small open circle °, and for “dark” the same circle filled up•.

Thus ° G is pale grey, and • G dark grey.

In taking memoranda of skies, every painter must have perceived that their colours are extremely *metallic*; even poets perceive this, and call the sky “golden,” “silvered,” “copper,” “leaden,” and the French poets sometimes call it brazen (*d’airain*). I therefore selected the metals most likely to be useful; but as their initial letters were the same as some already devoted to colours, I wrote each initial letter of the English word in the corresponding small Greek character. It would have been useless pedantry to take the initials of the Greek words themselves, because I am not in the habit of thinking in

Greek. This gave me the following abbreviational signs which I have since found of great use:—

Silver	z	Brass	z
Gold	z	Aluminium	a
Copper	c	Lead	l

The new metal, aluminium, was particularly useful, perhaps the most useful of all its delicate grey being of constant occurrence in the pale rain-clouds.

Again, as everybody who is in the habit of reading poetry, must have remarked that the poets when they describe the phenomena of the sky, cannot get on at all without precious stones, and as the peculiar transparency of air and semi-transparency of cloud often really do resemble precious stones, I added a series of abbreviations of the most useful stones, thus, taking the first two letters of each:—

Diamond,	Di	Topaz,	To
Ruby,	Ru	Amethyst,	Am
Emerald,	Em	Turquoise,	Tu
Pearl,	Pe	Coral,	Co
Sapphire,	Sa	Opal,	Op
Chrysoprase,	Ch	Lapis Lazuli,	La

These abbreviations are occasionally of great use, though less frequently required than the preceding ones.

We have now got some indication of colour and gradation, but in order to make our memorandum really valuable, we require tolerably accurate notes of light and shade.

There is really no time to get these with the brush. It is quite impossible by such means to define the

degree in which a light cloud relieves itself against a darker one, before both are transformed, or even to render the delicate differences in light between minute portions of the same cloud's surface. But it is extremely fortunate that, although colour can only be noted down in a rude and imperfect manner, degrees of light can, by a practised student, be noted with wonderful accuracy and precision. It is not desirable, for it would be of no use, to note the light of nature as it *is*; we need only set it down as paint is able to represent it. I, therefore, transpose the scale of Nature's light to my own scale of pictorial light in the memorandum itself.*

You may state light and dark with quite sufficient delicacy by means of numbers. I take 100 as my highest light—that is, the sun, and the intense splendour immediately surrounding it; with zero for my darkest dark—that is, a mountain at moonless midnight. All the intermediate numbers represent intermediate degrees of light.

If I had needed more minute distinctions, I might have graduated my light into a thousand degrees, but a hundred were quite sufficient, and the numbers from one to a hundred will express degrees of light with a delicacy and exactness which no combinations of words, however elaborate, could rival. They have also the great advantage of being expressible in *figures*, which are a very perfect kind of shorthand.

* The reader will find a full explanation of this difference in scale between natural and pictorial light in the chapter on the Relation between Photography and Painting.

In looking over my memoranda, I continually find such distinctions as this. One ridge of mountain is marked 50, another close to it 51; a distinction so extremely delicate, that nothing but numbers or art could state it—words certainly could not, and all artistic expression of it would cost too much time. The slightest exaggeration in the light of the second ridge would deprive a third ridge of its relief, and so destroy the truth of the memorandum.

By the help of numbers, the gradation sign gains also in significance.

D L

Here is the gradation without the help of numbers. We know that the colour is darkest at our left hand, and lightest at our right; but we do not know whether the gradation is regular or not, nor whether it is strong or faint. Gradation in nature is hardly ever regular; it usually becomes more rapid towards one end of the scale. Let us see how numbers will help us.

40 60 70 80
D L

We see by this that the gradation is much more rapid at our left hand, and that the middle tint is not half-way from the dark to the light, but much nearer the dark.

These figures being written in a very minute hand, may be put in all sorts of little places. A mere touch of intense sunshine on a cloud or mountain may be isolated by the pencil-point, and marked with a high figure to indicate the intensity of the light upon it, when the space would be too small to allow of a word being written in it.

My own memoranda of transient effects are covered all over with these signs ; but as it always requires some mental effort to decipher and realize such complicated pages, I find it saves time to translate them into colour before painting the effects in studio pictures.

FIFTH STUDY.—TRANSLATION OF THE PENCIL
MEMORANDUM.

I am so much more accustomed to oil than to water-colour, that I myself prefer translating the pencil memorandum into oil ; but I think the wisest way is always to translate it, on its own scale, into the material in which the picture is to be painted. If it is a water-colour drawing that you are going to do, your memorandum ought to be translated into water-colour ; but if for an oil-picture, I think it should be done in oil. The reason for this is, that the very same natural colour is rendered quite differently in the two media, and there is always some degree of uncertainty and confusion in translating a tint from one of the two art-languages into the other. All but the *very best* water-colour painting is extremely crude, in comparison with moderately good work in oil ; and this crudeness is especially hateful in skies, which are full of tender varieties of mingled grey, even in their most splendid passages.

In making this translation, the forms of the memorandum should be followed with the most servile fidelity. Every scratch in a good memorandum, even though inaccurate, is full of meaning, and is not to be omitted

without loss. As the translation is to be done on the scale of the memorandum, accuracy may be gained and time saved by tracing.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORANDA.

Whenever painters employ the camera for their own purposes, they must first divest themselves of all desire to produce pretty photographs. The photographic process gives very little truth at a time, and it is necessary that the painter who has recourse to it should know exactly what truth he wants, and sacrifice every other truth to that. It takes half a dozen photographs to get the details of a single scene if it is extensive. The painter should fix his mind on some particular portion of his subject each time he photographs it, and *try for that particular bit only*. If he does this intelligently and resolutely, and is tolerably skilful in the manipulation of the wet collodion process, he may get some memoranda which will be useful to him in the way of reference. One notable advantage of photography is that it renders the forms of shadows quite accurately, and *all at once*, which no drawing, however swift, ever can do. This is especially useful for memoranda of mountains, whose shadows are generally so multitudinous as to defy the draughtsman, and yet so expressive of form, that hardly one of them can be spared. The whole question of the utility of photography to artists is examined in the chapter on the Relation between Photography and Painting.

Such are the principal memoranda which it is desirable that a painter should possess before he begins a great

work in his studio. I think it ought to be by this time pretty clearly evident that painters who gather such elaborate memoranda as these, do not work in the studio merely because they are too idle to work from nature. On the contrary, it would in most cases be a considerable economy of toil to do the picture itself from nature, instead of devoting weeks of labour to the patient accumulation of materials.

Although we are to rely as little as may be on the memory, we cannot paint away from nature without continual reference to it. Minute difficulties are perpetually arising, which nothing but the memory can solve. In order to paint really well in the studio, we need vast and profound science. I can give no conception, to persons not practically acquainted with our art, of the immense miscellany of information which a landscape-painter must have at his command if he would make the best use of his memoranda. He employs, in fact, at every instant, the whole of his professional education and experience, just as a clever lawyer does in his daily practice, or a skilful general in actual warfare, or an experienced surgeon when he pays his daily visit to his hospital. The amount of knowledge which may be concentrated in the painting of half a dozen leaves, or in the covering of one square inch of canvass representing a bit of mountain flank, or a fragment of morning cloud, is so vast that it could not be fairly stated in many such volumes as this, even if words could express such knowledge at all, which they cannot. And all good studio-painters, however abundant and minute their memoranda, paint far more from knowledge, accumulated in the

memory by years of observation, than from the studies and sketches in their portfolios. Hence every prudent painter who works much away from nature will train his memory by systematic exercise to the utmost strength possible for it. How far such training may be of use we have now to consider.

The Law of Exercise is universal. The memory works under that law just as the muscles do. If we refuse to exercise our muscles, they will become weak and useless; if we refuse to exercise our memories, they will become weak and useless. There is no escape whatever from this law.

When a man condemns his arm to inaction for a number of years, as, for instance, the Indian devotees used to do, that arm withers and stiffens. If a man should condemn his memory to inaction for a number of years, his memory would wither and stiffen.

People *see* that their bodies want exercise, but they do not perceive that *all* their faculties want it, one just as much as another. The faculties of the mind are generally treated much in this fashion: those that the individual finds the most useful in the way of money getting he develops assiduously by exercise; and the other faculties, whose exercise would embarrass and impede the increase of his wealth, he leaves to die out in disuse. Thus it is that we find so many fragments of men and so few *men*—more artists like Turner, who could not spell, than like Leonardo and Michel Angelo, who were accomplished gentlemen. And thus it is that in our new school, if we do not look to it in time, we run some risk of having artists who are not only frag-

ments of men, but even fragments of artists, with eye and hand cultivated to the utmost, but the memory dead of disuse.

There are two ways in which the memory is very commonly injured and ill-used.

First (the old way), by giving it no variety in its work, but setting it to one little dull task for ever, choosing always some task *beneath* its strength, and in every way unlikely to develope its strength.

Secondly (the newly invented way), by refusing it all exercise whatever, despising its services, and shutting it up without employment till it gets sickly and debilitated, and incapable of the slightest exertion.

Strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as landscape-painting at all without the vivid light of a clear and vigorous memory. Such petty fidelities of practice as are so commonly found in the work of our younger students cannot of themselves give any claim to the title of landscape-painter. Fancy any one calling himself a landscape-painter who had never painted a mountain! And I think I have already conclusively shown how far it is possible to paint a mountain without the aid of the memory.

But if the memory is utterly unaccustomed to carrying burdens, poor work it will make of it. Long training and much labour are needed before the memory is capable of carrying half a dozen natural truths for a day together.

How then is this faculty to be trained? What system of mental gymnastics will best develope its force and enlarge its capacity?

The right way is to learn something off by heart every day from nature, not drawing it nor sketching it in any way until we come home, and then trying to draw it faithfully. In these exercises Invention is to be employed as little as possible, because our present business is to make our memory reliable. It is, of course, wise to begin with very simple things indeed, and mere pencil-sketching; afterwards we may advance to sepia, and, lastly, to water-colour or oil. *We are not to draw from memory things that we have already drawn from nature*, because, when we do that, the memory always has recourse to the drawing, and not to the scene itself; and we want to be able to remember nature, not our own performances. Bits of building are good for practice, because they are full of definite measurable facts, and are easily referred to afterwards. The student may gradually advance until he comes to try to learn by heart the front of a great Gothic cathedral, so as to draw it in detail at home without having sketched it from nature. When he can manage some such feat as this approximately well, he may attempt the sepia study, which is so far a preparation for the subsequent colour work that it contains a complete statement of the relative darkness of all the local tints. After that it may be well to attempt oil-painting from memory alone without any assistance from memoranda, even the slightest sketch being a help too great to be permitted. When the details of a complete picture can be carried pretty safely in the memory, we may proceed to cultivate the inventive faculty.

The peculiarity of Invention is, that it is based on

memory, and is quite powerless unless the memory is richly stored. Inexperienced artists can never know whether they have any invention or not, nor can anybody else decide it for them until they have trained and stored their memories. When Turner was very young, his works showed no trace of noble invention; but as he grew older the inventive faculty progressed exactly in proportion as he enriched his memory. Memory is like a nation that provides the men and materials of war. Invention is the Emperor, who disposes of all these resources, and marshals them on the fields of victory.

When we have for years been in the habit of systematically training the memory, we ought to be rich enough to find out whether we really have any invention or not; and it becomes henceforth our duty to cultivate the inventive faculty by exercise, just as we formerly did the retentive faculty.

The way to do this is to paint a certain number of pictures every year from memory and invention *alone*, without the aid of memoranda. If we are strong enough to do this well, it is, at this stage of our culture, the severest and best training possible to us as painters. In such works as these the memory is entirely subordinate to invention, and only furnishes the materials of which Invention disposes at its sovereign will.

So that there are all these different ways of painting:—

1. Real painting from nature, possible only in foreground work.
2. Painting from nature with the help of memoranda.
3. Painting from elaborate memoranda, away from nature.

4. Painting from memory, aided by slight notes.
5. Painting from the unaided memory.
6. Painting from invention, aided by memory.

Since the custom of painting from nature became prevalent, there appears to exist a most unfounded idea to the effect that no progress in art is to be made anywhere but in the open fields. After very carefully examining the successive works of several landscape painters who do not paint from nature at all, I am quite convinced, on the other hand, that striking progress is constantly made in *the art of painting* within the walls of studios.

We do not in the studio learn anything new about natural aspects ; but we may get a great deal of practical experience in painting as an art.

And at this particular epoch in the history of the English school, is it not this kind of experience which is most needed ?

“I have no hesitation,” said Mr. Leslie, “in expressing my conviction that the thing just now most in danger of being neglected by painters, is *the art of painting*.”

Certainly the art of painting is more neglected by our younger school than the laws of nature. We have reversed the practice of certain elder masters. They painted falsehood well ; and we paint truth badly.

I believe that there is little chance of our school taking the place it ought to occupy until it has combined mastery of style with truth of statement. We have had two perfect styles in their way, those of Reynolds and Gainsborough, and a third very skilful but imperfect style, that of Turner. At present, with three or four

exceptions, which it would be invidious to point out by name, the royal mastery over materials, which constitutes splendid style, can scarcely be said to exist amongst us, all our best and most conscientious artists being still rather timid and cautious students than swift and mighty makers. Hence our school is treated quite contemptuously by all the organs of foreign criticism, though in knowledge of nature it certainly surpasses all contemporary schools. What we nearly all of us need, myself amongst the rest, is careful and long discipline in the manipulation of mere *paint*. I do not mean that we are to try to work in the old manner, but to develop to the very utmost the resources of our own modern manner. Good oil-pictures may be painted in an infinite variety of ways.

I have not space to examine the work of the elder masters in this book, and shall therefore speak only of the two great modern manners—the English thin painting, and the French solid painting.

The most obvious peculiarity of living English painters, as contrasted with the younger French artists, is their extraordinary skill in the use of transparent colour, and their habitual reliance upon it in the most important parts of the building of the picture. A striking difference in workmanship between the two schools is, that the English are highly skilled and accomplished mechanics, working most neatly, whilst the French are comparatively clumsy and awkward, with a strange depth of science in their clumsiness. There is, however, a polish which is mean, and a rudeness which is noble; and it may be doubted whether our national love of neatness

is not rather out of place when we apply it to the intellectual arts.

Having practised both processes, I may offer a few observations on their relative merits.

It is possible to paint a complete picture with nothing but a glaze for a foundation, and a light opaque scumble, thinly dragged over it in the lights to give it solidity. There are parts of Landseer's most effective pictures which consist of little more than that; and it is really wonderful how little colour a picture may be painted with if we choose to be scrupulously economical. The advantage of such work is, that it may be done upon an exquisitely delicate drawing, and that the drawing is not afterwards lost and buried under the colour, but may be preserved in all its delicacy. An object painted first in transparent colour, with opaque tints very carefully matched, and lightly dragged over the still sticky surface of the half-dried megilp on the illuminated side, will look very real at slight expense of either colour or labour. Small works painted in this way on panel look very exquisite if skilfully done; but painting of this kind does not admit of the slightest alteration, and requires the greatest delicacy and precision in every touch. This is the extreme of thin-colour painting. Its defects are an inevitable want of truth and variety in the shadows, where the play of hue is sacrificed to mere depth and transparency of tone. Again, it is good for certain kinds of texture, but bad for others. The fur of animals, and the feathers of birds, and the smoothness of polished armour, may be imitated in this way till they look very attractive and real; but rocks, and buildings, and vege-

tation do not look right without a more solid preparation; nor is it possible to paint any distant object satisfactorily with transparent colour. Thus, you may imitate a bit of carved wainscot, close to the spectator, with nothing more than a brown glaze and a light scumble, but you cannot so imitate a mountain.

Notwithstanding the immense addition made of late years to our resources in transparent colour by the discovery of the new madders, it is absolutely impossible to colour really well, in oil, without using opaque colour even in the shadows. The resources of the transparent colours are still far too limited to allow of any truthful representation of nature by their means. They look plausible and pretty because they give such lucid depth of tone; but unless supported by powerful opaque colouring underneath, they are nearly sure to be false. As Sir Charles Eastlake has already shown, the prejudice of Rubens against white in shadows was quite groundless, because the internal brightness, which he seems to have considered it necessary to preserve by making all the shadows transparent, may be attained at any point in the progress of the picture by painting the shadows solidly and *light*, and then letting their brightness shine through subsequent glazes. I think we English, like the Flemish painters, allow the love of transparency to lead us too far. I have a picture in my own possession by a well-known modern master, in which a cliff of limestone is entirely painted in one thin glaze on the bare canvass, and afterwards touched lightly here and there with opaque colour to give it some solidity. So thin is the painting that the preparatory drawing,

which was done in black ink, shows through in various places ; and no one who knows the value of a good solid dead-colouring can look at the picture without regretting that such a preparation was entirely omitted.

The kind of solid painting first invented by Décamps, and carried to an extreme by his imitators, is the reverse of this method. Its first basis is a rough dead colouring in opaque colour, followed by successive processes in thick opaque colour, left purposely very coarse in parts; but, in the case of the cleverest painters, with cunning foresight. The transparent glazes are reserved until the work is already far advanced, when they are freely employed, and often with peculiar power, owing to the texture of the opaque groundwork, which has been variously prepared to receive them. I think this method, rude and clumsy as it often looks, better adapted for variety of colour, and mystery, and truth of texture, than our own thin manner ; and I believe we might sometimes adopt it with advantage, under certain limitations.

The technical art of painting is so extremely various that anything like bigotry to particular methods is a proof of much ignorance and narrowness. It is a common failing in critics to become exclusively attached to the manner of some great master, as, for instance, Titian, and to condemn every expedient which he either was ignorant of or did not care to employ, as a mere trick, and an evidence of illegitimate execution. I should be very happy if some lover of legitimacy in painting would be kind enough to explain to me the meaning of the word. It is derived, I suppose, from the Latin word *lex*, which

signifies *law*, and I desire to be informed *who made the law*. No true artist ever troubles himself about laws made by other people as to the practice of his own art. Every real painter is king of his own colour-box. It is of no use to tell him that any expedient is illegitimate which he finds useful and convenient, because he will employ it in defiance of all precedent and authority, and will only smile at your dogmatisms, and disobey you quite coolly and tranquilly the very next time he sets his palette. He will not argue with you in words, because he knows better than so to waste his time; but he will be sure to express himself in his own way after all, so that it is of no use preaching to him on the principles of "legitimacy." This quiet obstinacy and gentle independence are essential parts of the artist-nature; nor is it possible that a genuine artist should give any serious heed to the counsels of self-constituted advisers.

I, therefore, refrain from offering any impertinent advice to my brother artists as to the methods they ought to adopt. I recognise their absolute right to paint exactly as they please. I admit that Turner and Landseer are as legitimate as Titian and Rubens. The question in art is the *result*, not the means. There are processes in modern art that were unknown to the Venetians, and which a bigoted admirer of the Venetians would stupidly condemn as idle tricks of the brush. When shall we all become enlightened enough to understand that the manner and methods of every great artist are not adopted by him from free choice, but from imperative necessity—that they are the *only* methods by which

it is possible for him to express the particular truths he desires to render? It would be utterly impossible to rival the texture of Landseer with Raphael's way of work, but is Landseer to sacrifice texture because Raphael did not care for it? It would be impossible to imitate the atmosphere of Turner in Titian's manner, but is Turner not to paint the haze of noon because Titian cared only for depth of tone and twilight?

It is the instinctive sense of this necessity for complete liberty in methods which makes all real painters so impatient of rules in workmanship, that they will not even condescend to prescribe any themselves when humbly and respectfully requested to do so by inferior men. A great Scottish painter, when asked *how* a thing was to be done, used to answer that the "how" signified nothing whatever, and sometimes added that the inquiring pupil might paint with his elbows if he found it more convenient. All which is very perplexing to the youthful aspirant, who is sure to get nothing but rebuffs when he asks for technical information. But there is a sound reason for it, which is, that the attachment to *methods* for their own sake is quite fatal to the progress of any artist. Once let a painter get pleased and proud on the ground of the legitimacy and orthodoxy of his methods, and it is all over with him. ¶

On the other hand, as I think it very hard that young painters, whose only crime is to desire to do things quite rightly, should never get any satisfactory answer to their questions, I will give in this place what seems to me the soundest and most sensible way of painting a landscape from memoranda.

FIRST PROCESS.—THE CARTOON.

Prepare a cartoon on paper as the Flemish masters used to do. This cartoon should be on the same scale as the picture. Every form should be carefully drawn, and, if *truly* shaded, so much the better, but it need not be coloured.

I know that the practice of making cartoons has been abandoned by the modern schools, but I am sure that they save more time than they cost. They are especially useful for large pictures. I am in the habit of making careful cartoons myself, and am quite convinced that they save time, by checking any tendency to alteration, and by supplying a sure guide as to the forms. The material in which the cartoon is drawn is not of much consequence. It is better not to shade it at all, than, by careless shading, to injure the delicacy of the forms. If the cartoon is shaded in sepia, the paper must be wetted and stretched on a board, as mechanical draughtsmen stretch their paper, or else it will shrink and become less than the canvass. The cartoon should not be removed from the board until it is finished. The paper should not be too thick.

SECOND PROCESS.—THE TRACING OF THE CARTOON.

The canvass ought to be grey and not too rough. Chalk the back of the cartoon all over with common white chalk. Put it on the canvass, and go over the outlines of the principal masses with the tracing needle. Then remove the cartoon.

THIRD PROCESS.—THE FIRST PAINTING.

Fill up all the principal masses to the white chalk outlines in solid opaque colour carefully gradated, and kept purposely paler than you intend the picture to be when finished. Make the picture look as true as you can without giving any detail whatever. Give the utmost care to have the tints delicate and true. Do not hurry the process. When this is finished put the picture aside for several days, until it is quite dry and hard.

FOURTH PROCESS.—THE SECOND TRACING.

Scrape the surface of the hardened colour with the scraper to remove asperities. Put the cartoon on the canvass as before. Trace the minor masses, but not yet the smallest masses, nor any details. Remove the cartoon.

FIFTH PROCESS.—THE SECOND PAINTING.

Wipe off all superfluous chalk, leaving only just enough to mark the outlines of the masses. If you do not attend to this, the white chalk-dust will get into the edges of your masses and spoil the colour. Some artists actually trace with black greasy tracing-paper, so the black mixes with the paint and dirties the tints.

Go over the whole picture in solid colour, very carefully indeed, painting all the minor masses in their places, and showing the ground *through* your paint wherever its colour is likely to be useful. Do not block up your work by hiding your ground, as house-painters do, but make

it as serviceable as ever you can. If the first painting was properly done, so that its tints were true, you will find them invaluable until the very end ; and when the picture is finished, they will glow through everywhere, between the intricate network of opaque detail, and through the translucent films of the subsequent glazes. When this process is completed, the picture ought to look very well already.

SIXTH PROGRESS.—THE THIRD TRACING.

This time we trace the smallest masses, using the same precautions as before.

SEVENTH PROCESS.—THE THIRD PAINTING.

Define all the smallest masses, still in opaque colour, giving no detail ; but only preparation for detail by manipulating the colour so as to give great mystery everywhere. It is as necessary as ever to leave the work unequal and open, so as to show the former paintings through it. If your work has been properly gradated, it will now look quite luminous and attractive.

EIGHTH PROCESS.—THE FOURTH TRACING.

Trace all the details as far as is necessary to guide you in the painting.

NINTH PROCESS.—THE FOURTH PAINTING.

Paint the details in opaque colour, *carefully avoiding over definition, and preserving all the mysterious under colour* already prepared. This is very careful and delicate

work, and needs infinite patience, because not one touch is to be put *anywhere* without thought, nor to be laid without gradation. When it is done the picture should look *infinite* and mysterious, but paler and more opaque than if it were quite finished.

If there have been too great hardness and sharpness of definition in any of these opaque processes, it will need great labour in the finishing to give the true mystery of nature; but if the mystery has been carefully preserved from the beginning, every square inch of the picture will look quite infinite, and the detail will seem ten times as abundant as it would have done if it had all been sharply defined.

TENTH PROCESS.—GLAZING.

Glaze wherever you require depth and transparency. You ought not to have to glaze merely to correct the colouring, because all your colouring ought now to be nearly right though opaque. But you may want depth and transparency in many places, and these are not to be got easily without glazing.

If your opaque work has been properly done, *with a view to the subsequent glazing*, the glazes will aid the expression of texture by lodging in the intentional inequalities of the opaque colour; but where you do not want the transparent colour to lodge in this way, the opaque ground must be *perfectly smooth*, or else the glaze will leave all manner of unmanageable marks. If, for example, you were glazing a serene sky, you would not like it to assume the texture of a piece of granite.

When you want great depth, the glaze may be done

over and over again with plenty of megilp. But it requires great prudence and judgment to do this rightly.

ELEVENTH PROCESS.—DRY TOUCHING.

It is often necessary, in order to give texture, that a dry opaque colour should be dragged over the surface of the transparent colour so as to adhere to it in certain places. To prepare rightly for this process, the opaque colouring must have been previously modelled with the brush to the particular grain or sort of roughness required. Over this the subsequent glaze has been freely passed, and left deep in the pits and depressions, but shallow on the elevations, so as to mark the depressions with dark transparent lines or spots. The opaque dragging catches the elevations, and relieves them in a peculiar manner by giving them great apparent solidity. The whole process, with the preparation for it, imitates all granular textures with great accuracy, and is, therefore, much used in foregrounds for earth and rocks. The same process, subtly prepared for from the first, may be made to do a great deal in other ways. Thus the ripples on water may be prepared for by manipulation of colour in the opaque processes, and afterwards glazed and dry touched with much effect and little labour. Much preparation for these two latter processes may be done in the wet opaque colour with an ivory point or other instrument fitted to cut channels in which the deep glaze is afterwards to lie. The ridges raised by the same instrument catch the scumble and protect the dried glaze in the channels. Landseer can paint a perfect dog with nothing but a glaze and some dry touching.

When there is nothing under the transparent colour, the inequalities are obtained *in it* by using rather a thick medium capable of forming itself into permanent little ridges and hillocks at the will of the painter.

TWELFTH PROCESS.—FINISHING.

This consists in working delicately in either opaque or transparent colour wherever it is wanted, defining a form here, and obscuring another there, heightening the intensity of colour by minute touches, and doing, in short, whatever seems to be required, in a pleasant, desultory way. If the picture has been soundly and rightly constructed from the first, the finishing days are a very delightful time to the painter. He has quietly reserved a few mighty touches for the very last minute, —reserved them, and foreseen them, for long weeks or months. The hour at last is come when they are to be laid for ever on the canvass: all the innumerable multitude of the other touches are waiting for these latest ones, their princes and rulers. Then the spots of pure scarlet, and gold, and azure, are set in their appointed places, and the infinite array of the living tints about them glow and rejoice thenceforth in the gladness of everlasting loyalty.

ADDENDA.

I. PHOTOGRAPHIC MISREPRESENTATION OF LOCAL COLOUR.

IN the chapter on the Relation between Photography and Painting, I omitted half my argument for fear of wearying the reader; but, as only the more earnest sort of readers study appendices, I will endeavour here to give some notion of the enormous extent to which photography is false in its translation of local colour.

Of the three primitive colours, blue, red, and yellow, photography is excessively sensitive to blue, and little sensitive to either red or yellow. Consequently, it is quite sure to give *all* the relations of *all* mixed tints falsely. In other words, its translation of the local colour of Nature is sure to be relatively false from beginning to end—*and it is so*. Nor can any of the thousand expedients which have been tried by photographers correct this in any degree at all satisfactory to a painter, though they do ingeniously modify or reduce the most obvious falsities. No translation of local colour can be of the least use to an artist which is false in *any* of its relations.

The public, I suppose, does not generally care much for truth of local colour; perhaps I may go yet a little farther and say that the public, as a body, is not yet sufficiently acquainted with the rudiments of art-criticism, to be even aware that there *is* such a thing as local colour in mere black and white art at all. There is no colour in the sense of *hue*, but there still remain the relative lightness and darkness of colours, which, in all finished work in black and white, as, for example, engravings, have to be carefully and accurately rendered, and defects in which are quite intolerable to all persons who possess even an elementary knowledge of art. I do not say that the entire *absence* of local colour would be intolerable; because, then, the work would fall under one of the many categories of abstract art, that is, art which avowedly attempts only certain truths, frankly abstaining from any endeavour to render the others. Thus, for example, no one quarrels with Albert Durer for not having rendered local colour in his woodcuts, because it is quite clear that he desired only to give the abstract form, without any local colour

whatever.* But every real artist is tormented by the false presence to local colour which exists everywhere in a photograph, because, even when by the interposition of blue glass, or by chemical experiments, or by prolonged exposure, this defect may be sufficiently overcome to give detail in some of the dark places, and so satisfy a photographer; every painter knows that all the lights and darks are still *relatively* wrong, and therefore utterly valueless and unreliable.

2. LIGHT IN ART AND NATURE.

Pictorial art of all kinds has one great falsity, and mother of falsities, eternal as the arts themselves. It can never imitate the intensity of natural light. And when I stated that Nature's power of light was a thousand times as great as that of painting or photography, the statement, however strong it might appear, was very, very far below the simple truth. A white gunwad in dull daylight (such as the light suitable for seeing pictures in) is in itself quite as luminous as a sun of Claude or Turner; and a simple experiment would convince anybody that it does not give a thousandth part of the light of the real sun. If the reader imagines that I have in any way overstated the matter, let him paste a thousand such gunwads on the walls of any ordinary room in dull pictorial daylight, and see whether their united splendour is equal to one gleam of full, direct, unimpeded sunshine.

The Turner Room in the National Gallery affords a fair opportunity for judging of this matter. There are a good many Turnerian suns there, in full splendour, and it may be interesting to some persons to observe how far all these united pictorial suns are together able to dazzle the eyes of visitors. If we were in a picture-gallery with a thousand such suns, I think we should find their splendour quite easily endurable, even by weak eyes.

3. PROCESSES IN OIL-PAINTING.

The outline of processes given at the conclusion of the chapter on Painting from Memoranda is not to be understood as a complete statement of everything that may be necessary in the construction of all landscapes, but only as a rude sketch of a difficult road, indicating its most important stations. Much labour may be required before *one* of these

* (On which account I regret the introduction of the dark sky in his *Visitation*, because it relieves the clouds by local colour, whereas local colour is refused everywhere else. Again, the local darkness of the sky, though true relatively to the clouds, would be false relatively to any local colour in the figures possible in printer's ink. Even if the figures were black silhouettes, like the cheap portraits that used to be cut out of black paper, such of them as are in shade would not be nearly dark enough to express their natural relation to that dark sky.

processes is quite satisfactorily accomplished. The painter may be compelled to repeat his preparatory layer several times before it comes quite to his liking. Wyld is never satisfied with the preparatory ground-colour of a picture until he has painted over the whole canvass *sixteen times at the very least*. I do not recommend such an example for imitation, but it may be some encouragement to young artists who find themselves disheartened by repeated failures in their attempts at colour, to be told that a painter of great experience and high standing has to force his way to the ground-colour of a single picture through sixteen or twenty coats of paint. This extreme fastidiousness and utter regardlessness of self-interest in Wyld's habits of work are curiously characteristic of the high artistic nature. If Wyld cared less for his art, and more for money, he might multiply his income by four, without working one hour more in the course of the year. Still, I am sure that this habit may be carried to an excess which may become injurious, not to the pocket only, but to the picture itself, and I recommend the student to try always to keep the number of processes or layers of colour within reasonable bounds. The world's best masterpieces contain internal evidence that they were done with little effort, and in few processes; and great colourists, like good riflemen, usually hit the target at the first shot.

The recommendation to reserve transparent colour until the last is merely a general caution, intended chiefly for beginners. I have not a word to say against transparent colour, as Reynolds used it in portrait, and as Linnell still uses it in landscape. I know not how to express my admiration for Linnell's mighty way of using those dangerous glazes. It may be necessary in many subjects to glaze richly and repeatedly, on the ground-colour itself, before any detail is attempted, and then touch upon the glazes with opaque colour. But this is neither easy nor safe, though when well done exceedingly effective.

4. POPULAR CONTEMPT FOR TOPOGRAPHIC TRUTH.

At the International and Royal Academy Exhibitions of this year (1862) I remained close to several pictures for a long time with the express purpose of listening to the comments of visitors. Everything I heard confirmed the assertion so frequently made in these volumes that topographic truth is, in itself, offensive to the majority of spectators. For example, in the Academy there was a topographic picture of Champéry by Brett, the best thing he has done yet, and consequently the best example of purely topographic landscape which has been produced since the creation of the world. Some lucky and wise buyer had the discernment to purchase the picture for the moderate sum (if I remember rightly) of a hundred and seventy guineas.

But the general public only laughed at it. Now, it always strikes me as one of the strangest peculiarities of the general public that, whilst delicate and sincere truth makes it laugh, impudent falsehood has usually the power, if power it be, to command its serious respect and admiration. Pictures of Swiss scenery, done up on conventional principles by painters who have never seen Switzerland, are never laughed at by the public at all: but a thoroughly careful and conscientious piece of work, done in earnest on the spot, by a painter who has trained himself steadily and severely to the rendering of *truth*, and who has no other object in life than to render it as he best may, makes nine spectators out of ten titter in the silliest manner, as if it were really something inherently ridiculous. During all the hours which I spent on different days in the study of that most admirable work I only remember *one* spectator (except myself) who gave it the respectful attention which it deserved, and I believe that one was a painter. In passing through Paris, however, I went, as usual, to see Wyld; and one of the very first questions he asked me about the Academy was, "What did you think of Brett's Champéry, and the blue shadows on its mountains?"—but then Wyld is himself an accomplished landscape painter.

The Val d'Aosta, by the same master, in the International Exhibition, is in many respects inferior to the Champéry, though infinitely above the criticism of all but the most advanced students of landscape. Still, of the immense crowd who were packed together to try to get a glimpse of Landseer's picture of the Queen and Prince Albert (highly attractive to the British public, from its delightful combination of gentlemanliness, domesticity, royalty, and field sports), and who were thus against their will compelled to see the Val d'Aosta, which, under other circumstances, they would never have looked at—of all these people, I say, I am certain that not ten per cent. saw it without a mingled feeling of astonishment and aversion, and, so far as I heard, the few who condescended to give it two minutes' study were only induced to look at it because they saw from the catalogue that Ruskin was the owner of it, or remembered that he had praised it. So much for the attractiveness of truth. A fourth-rate water-colour of the same subject, cooked on "composition" principles by some drawing-master who had taken a slight sketch of the place as he passed through it in the holidays, or who, perchance, had never seen the place at all, would have certainly commanded the respect, and very probably the sincere admiration, of all these good people. As for the foreign critics, since the purple and green of nature were frankly rendered in this work, such critics could never endure it, because the general continental notion of good colour is simply plenty of brown.

I should be exceedingly sorry if Mr. Brett, whom I have not the honour

to know personally, were in the least discouraged by this statement of the extreme slightness of his influence on the world ; but such work as his bears in itself such clear evidence of superiority to popular criticism, that I know the ridicule of ignorant people will never affect him in the least. He must know very well already that none but cultivated observers can receive so much truth as he gives without being offended by it ; and all his patient labour must be undertaken and carried through in the calm conviction that it will be unpopular, though with the inward assurance that it is right.

5. POPULAR DISLIKE TO UNUSUAL EFFECTS.

The great landscape by Mr. W. Linnell, the "Gleaner's Return," though necessarily very much darker than nature (a necessity caused by the colour of the sky), was as nearly true in effect as art can well come ; and the effect is not a very extraordinary one, for I have seen it a hundred times. Nevertheless, it was extraordinary enough to give considerable offence ; and some of the newspapers, of course, told Mr. Linnell that it was "not a proper subject for art," which merely means that it was not an effect familiar to newspaper writers, who, for the most part, live in cities. I have pointed out its one great inevitable falsity ; but people who pretend to a knowledge of art ought to accept the limitations of art contentedly. No natural effect which contains both intense light and intense colour can possibly be interpreted in art without sacrificing either light, or colour, or both. In this case Mr. Linnell sacrificed light to colour, and quite rightly, or else he must have lost the flames of the glowing sky, which were the chief fact he desired to impress upon the spectator's mind.

6. FRENCH ACCENTS.

I had originally written the name of Decamps, the French painter, without accent, and that of Niépce with an acute accent. On referring, however, whilst correcting the proofs, to a French catalogue, in which the name of Decamps repeatedly occurred, I found that the *e* was always accented, and this, coupled with the fact that the syllable is more frequently pronounced as if so accented, led me to alter it. On reference to two French works on Photography I found Niépce without accent, and so altered that too. But after the sheets were printed it still seemed to me that I had been right at first, and this led me to look out the words in all the French books I had at hand. Van Monckhoven, in his valuable "Traité de Photographie," always accents Niépce thus. E. About, F. de Lasteyrie, Delécluze, and the "Dictionnaire des Contemporains," give Decamps without any accent, and I believe they are right in the case of the painter, though other persons who bear a similar name often write it with an acute

accent. I mention this lest the reader should attribute an error to mere carelessness, which was, in fact, due to over-anxiety to be accurate.

7. THE HEAD OF GLEN ETIVE.

In the first volume, page 375, there is a note in which I suggested a new Highland route by which a steamer should go from Oban to "the head of Glen Etive." Of course I intended to say the head of *Loch* Etive. The head, or upper end, of Glen Etive is near King's House; the foot, or lower end, of the glen being at the head of Loch Etive.

8. THE LAW OF PROGRESS IN INVENTIONS.

At the conclusion of the chapter on the Double Star in the first volume, I took occasion to point out that inventions were gradually perfected through thousands of examples, and laid some stress on the necessity for the continual multiplication of experiments. I did not, however, sufficiently explain *how* the multiplicity of examples aids the progress of inventions. Unthinking people might mechanically multiply examples of stupid and clumsy inventions without in any way improving upon them. The true law of progress in inventions is briefly this:—The inventor conceives a thought, he embodies his thought in a material form, but the thought is no sooner realized than it becomes enlarged and modified; realize this modified thought, and lo! just as before, the second realization shall suggest a new idea which will again press for a visible realization of the whole, and so on through thousands of examples, till not only the parent idea, but all the numberless progeny of ideas to which it was destined to give birth, are at last embodied, and then, but not before, the invention shall have reached its final form. And so long as any power of growth remains in the invention, the idea of the inventor will always be in advance of any visible example he may be able to produce.

I have just met with a letter addressed to the *Times* by Mr. Whitworth, the inventor of the Whitworth ordnance. There is a little passage in it which ought to be preserved in a more permanent form, because it hits the main root of the difference of opinion between inventors of all kinds and their detractors:—

It should be borne in mind, that in artillery practice, as in other subjects, experience enables conclusions to be drawn which go beyond the point where actual results are left.

This is exactly what the outside public has never yet been willing to admit. The progressive tendency of all real inventions, and especially *the way in which practice advances theory beyond the point attained by practice itself*, are always denied or ignored, and, I suppose, always will be. Inventors

may sometimes be too visionary; but their enemies usually err far more in the opposite direction. The world sees nothing beyond the material result; for it the slightest check or failure is final. Yet all experience proves that such failures are nothing else than friendly critics and teachers, kindly, though sternly, training us for ultimate success. Failure is God's own great school, wherein He instructs His most intelligent children, and confides to them innumerable secrets.

So let us have faith in this endless teaching of progressive experience; and, whether we are painters or men of science, remember this great and profound maxim, worthy of Leonardo, with which I may not unfitly close this work:—

EXPERIENCE ENABLES CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN WHICH GO BEYOND THE POINT WHERE ACTUAL RESULTS ARE LEFT.

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